

A DARKENED WISH: COMIC MEETS LIVESTREAM

# DRAGON

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

# GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

«SWIPE TO THE NEXT PAGE»



ISSUE 24

# DRAGON+ 24

## Welcome to Issue 24

Yeah, I have an anchor tattoo on each of my forearms, but I wasn't aiming to look like Popeye (or his pappy). They resulted from a mix of equal parts of Captain Haddock, actual sailing, and punk rock in the late '80s.



## Imagining the Ampersand

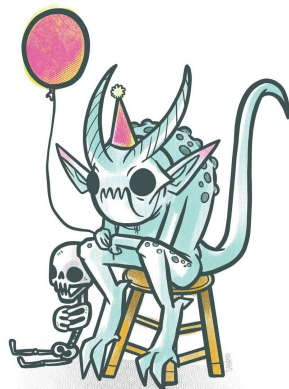
Detail from Grzegorz Rutkowski's art for *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* graces our cover this month and he takes us through the ship-shattering full image.



## A Darkened Wish

Writer and livestreamer B. Dave Walters is busy putting the final touches to a new Dungeons & Dragons comic for IDW. And he'll be bringing those characters to life in more ways than one...





## Foibles and Quirks

Ready to add even more detail to your character? Then look no further than the following "Quirks and Foibles"—including our expanded list of familiars, companions, and pets!



## The Best of the DMs Guild

DMs Guild Adept Shawn Merwin takes to the high seas, looking at nautical content for your D&D game. Hoist your mainsail and batten down the hatches as you head out on the briny!



## Terror of Undermountain

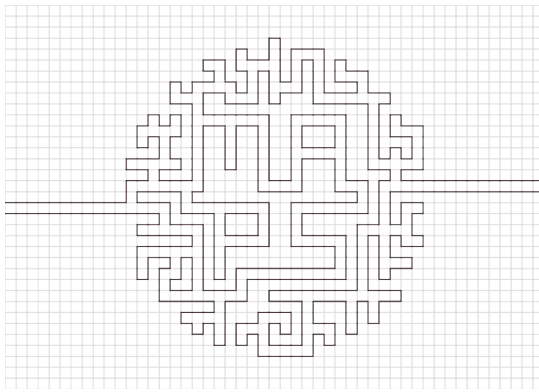
Adobe asked artists to create a creature from the very depths of their worst nightmares using D&D monster parts. Roll a Con saving throw and check out the incredible results below!

## BEHIND THE SCREEN: GREYHAWK

### Behind the Screen

*Behind the Screen* offers Dungeon Masters tips, tricks, resources, and ideas as further creative fuel for your gaming. In this installment, we look back at one of the game's earliest campaign settings—Greyhawk.





## Maps of the Month

Delving deeper into Undermountain, we find a new round of maps for your game!



Reverend Fred Kluth shares his spiritual take on D&D as *Dragon+* offers this platform to thank him for his generous Extra Life charitable donation.



## Fiction: Law and Order

A look at Beamdog's Rasaad yn Bashir's early years—starting as a pickpocket in the streets of Calimport...

## Streaming Highlights

This issue we bring you comic-based adventuring, celebrations of classic tabletop and video gaming, as well as more options to complement your ocean voyages.





## Next Issue: Dragon+ 25

Join our stream of consciousness  
in the next exciting edition of  
*Dragon+*!





# DRAGON+ 24

## Welcome to Issue 24

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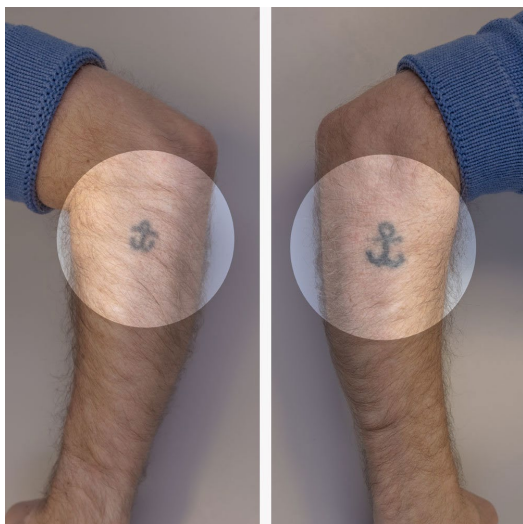
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I grew up loving Tintin. Hergé's stories were one of the first things my mom gave me to read, and I've always thought Captain Haddock was a funny character. But I also grew up sailing, taking lessons on small single-handed boats when I was a kid, and occasionally helping adults on larger ones as I got a bit older. The last ingredient, and essential catalyst, was punk rock. At a punk house party in my first year of university I saw some friends giving each other "jailhouse" tattoos (using sterilized sewing needles and India ink), and I thought, "Wow that's neat. What would I tattoo on myself?" Later that night I had an anchor on the port side forearm.



A year or so later we were hosting a twenty-four-hour garage sale (which also seemed very punk rock to us), where we had a mix of



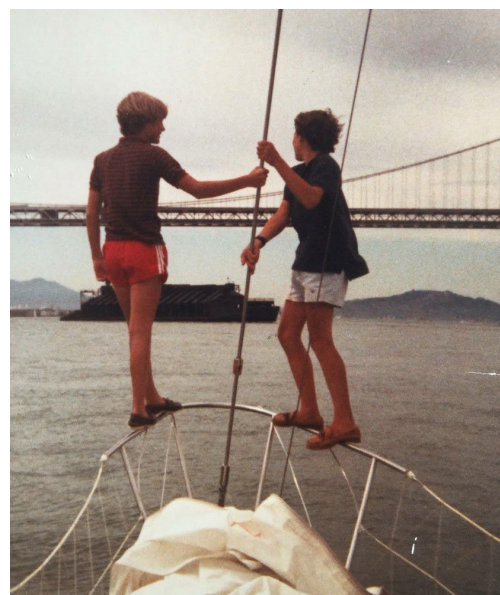


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things and “experiences” for sale. Besides all the junk our friends wanted to try and sell, we had coffee, a BB gun rifle range, buzzer haircuts, beat-poetry written live on the spot, and lastly—you guessed it—jailhouse tattoos. That night I traded a haircut for a second anchor tattoo

on my starboard arm. I’ve never gotten another tattoo, but I’m thinking of getting one on my 50th or 60th birthday. Perhaps a ship on my chest. A starship?

Anyway, I spent a fair amount of time on boats between the ages of ten and sixteen—one summer I didn’t touch dry land for two months! The closest I got to land was a dock attached to it. It wasn’t the high seas, but we were on the boat that *entire* time. My friend Lyle’s father owned a vessel called *The Shillelagh*—named after an **Irish club**, rather than the **fifth edition Druid spell**—and he would take the three of us into the California Delta system from the bay.

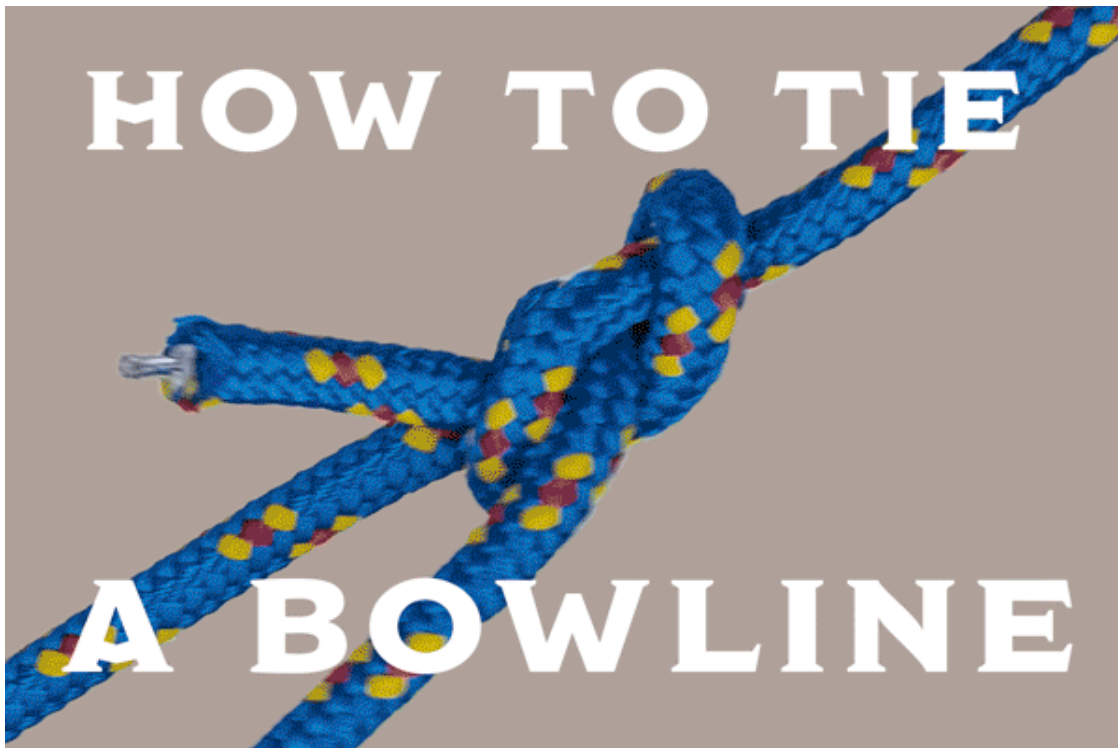


Chris and friend Lyle goofing off after taking down the jib on the Shillelagh, early 1980s. (Select to view)

This was at the same age that I was playing D&D with my friends (although we never played on the boat, as there were only ever a couple of us preferring *Trivial Pursuit* or firing up the generator to watch *Miami Vice* over the air on our small TV). And as someone who has slept on a boat for months, that’s the last place I would set a campaign, unless *everyone* on board was equally invested in the game.

My experience is that there's hardly enough room to live with one other person, much less have an adventure. Think of it like camping: you're living in berths and all the necessities of life are compromised; there is a toilet but you get a little workout every time you have to hand-crank it.

So I was impressed recently by WizKids' model for *The Falling Star sailing ship*, based on a map drawn by a teenage Chris Perkins. I don't have a lot of experience with that type of boat, but those huge, broad ships lend themselves to multi-level maps, whereas the plans of any boats from my youth would be tiny. The larger boats would be two levels, about two-by-five squares in size, while the small, single-handed boats would be a single level just two-and-a-half squares across. Not much need there to roll a Perception check!



What sailing does offer is the same sense of teamwork you find in a D&D party. You might be living in close quarters with people who are starting to get on your nerves, but you still have to cooperate to get things done. Even a small boat is a big, unwieldy thing and if you want to move it somewhere, you have to make arrangements. I know that people singlehandedly sail boats in isolation, but generally there's a crew for a reason. And you can be pretty sure at least one of them will have an anchor tattoo, especially if I'm aboard.

Chris Imlay



*If you can stomach “entrepreneurial” music, and want to browse songs and photos from my punk-ish days, check out [www.oldthumbrecords.com](http://www.oldthumbrecords.com) and accept my apology in advance.*

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## Imagining the Ampersand

Detail from Grzegorz Rutkowski's art for *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* graces our cover this month and he takes us through the ship-shattering full image.

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**T**he fates were clearly smiling down on Grzegorz Rutkowski when he was a child. The cover artist for *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*—the sea-bound Dungeons & Dragons adventure book that will launch in 2019—first began to draw aged five or six and his choice of subject matter couldn't have been more appropriate.

“I started as a child and my first drawings were simple comic books and images of pirates,” he tells *Dragon+*. “I took a serious approach and started to paint traditionally when I was aged twelve. I was attending extra art lessons after school and playing around with acrylics and oil paints. And I thought I would go to an art academy or university





and use that traditional approach. Then in the final class I discovered digital art.”

Grzegorz Rutkowski

The revelation that all you need to create incredible art is a tablet and a computer changed the course of Rutkowski’s life. He bought his first digital kit more than a decade ago and hasn’t looked back since.

**There are a lot of different elements to this image. We have the party in the smaller boat being attacked by the figure rising out of the ocean, as well as the cinematic backdrop of a huge creature attacking the main ship. Did you work on those parts separately?**

My first job was to create the compositional sketch and I had to decide where to put the ship, where to put the giant octopus and where to put the boat. I included very rough sketches of the boat as I had to fit it into the layout of the cover without the title of the book covering it too much.



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The area in the foreground is the main focal point, although you could say there are a few focal points in this image. The most important one is the situation in the boat and the sahuagin that is attacking. The next focal point is the moon and the ship in the

background. When you look at the raw image without any other layout components you can see that the octopus is the third focal point. But on the final cover the situation on the smaller boat will be the most important so I tried to hide the octopus with the clouds and the mist.

### **How would you describe your art style?**

Chaotic. Totally chaotic. I create tutorials and I'm always trying to find a neat way to explain things but my usual workflow is a little too chaotic to show.

### **You began using traditional artist's materials such as oils and acrylics but switched once you discovered digital tools. Was the transition easy?**

Once I discovered I could create art on my computer using a Wacom tablet it totally changed everything. I was preparing myself by studying art history but being able to use these tools and find everything on the internet was a revelation. I bought my first tablet in 2007 or 2008.



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I live in a small flat with my wife and didn't have the space I needed to paint traditionally. With digital art that's not a problem. We're



currently building a new house and I would have liked to have created a space to paint traditionally again in the new property but I didn't get the opportunity to do that.

**Was it easy to replicate your style using digital tools or did you have to develop new skills?**

The way you think and the way your mind works is pretty much the same but the medium is different. That can be true with traditional techniques. If you paint with acrylics the medium is slightly different than if you paint with oils and the same goes for digital art. In traditional media you don't have commands like Control Z or copy or all of the things you can do in Photoshop. But the approach is pretty much the same whatever the format.



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**There's still a classic feel to some of the work you create, such as the sailing ship in Harbor Rise and your castle study—both found on your Artstationpage. Do you feel you can now create the same work digitally that you would have done traditionally?**

When I first started with digital art I couldn't match the work I created using traditional media. I didn't know what I know now and I always felt it was different. Since I started using my **oil brushes** I found I was able to create more traditional-looking images in



Photoshop and my style became much closer to the style I had when I was working with traditional media.



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**You're well known at Wizards of the Coast for your work on *Magic: The Gathering* . Is this the first time you've worked with Dungeons & Dragons?**

The *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* cover is the first thing I've ever done for them. I'm working on two more illustrations but I can't say too much right now.

I've been familiar with D&D since I was at school and my friend had the *Monster Manual*, which was a big inspiration for me. But I didn't imagine I would one day work on a cover for D&D. My colleagues already know I work on *Magic: The Gathering* and they're hugely excited by that so when they find out I'm working on Dungeons & Dragons they will be as excited as hell!

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[Learn more](#)



You can find more of Grzegorz Rutkowski's work on his **Artstation** and **Deviant Art** websites, connect with him on **Facebook** and watch his painting tutorials on **YouTube** .



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# IN THE WORKS



# PREVIEWS



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## IN THE WORKS

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# In The Works

Join our tour of the hot new products coming soon to a tabletop near you...

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The *Dragon+* team held council at the end of 2018, and decreed that each issue would continue to offer early looks at products in development. And so, let's see what's in the works...

### GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

What's this? Why, it's our first official Dungeons & Dragons book of 2019!

You may have already caught hints in our recent *Spoilers & Swag* episode, where Kate Welch and Nathan Stewart showed off a preview of the book's cover art and the nautical theme.

This video is private

Looking back, there was also our recent edition of *Unearthed Arcana, Of Ships and the Sea*... and, of course, WizKids' massive ship, *The Falling Star*!

Nestled on the coast of the Azure Sea is Saltmarsh, a sleepy fishing village that sits on the precipice of destruction. Smugglers guide their ships to hidden coves, willing to slit the throat of anyone fool enough to cross their path. Cruel sahuagin gather beneath the waves, plotting to sweep away coastal cities. Drowned sailors stir to unnatural life, animated by dark magic and sent forth in search of revenge. The cult of a forbidden god extends its reach outward from a decaying port, hungry for fresh victims and willing recruits. While Saltmarsh slumbers, the evils that seek to plunder it grow stronger. Heroes must arise to keep the sea lanes safe for all.

Combining some of the most popular classic adventures from the first edition of D&D along with some of the best nautical adventures from the history of *Dungeon* magazine, look for *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* to hit shelves in May. This collection for levels 1-12 features the following adventures, all fully adapted to fifth edition rules:

- *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*
- *Danger at Dunwater*
- *The Final Enemy*
- *Isle of the Abbey*
- *Tammeraut's Fate*
- *The Styes*
- *Salvage Operation*

With the book in hand, consider running any of these adventures individually. Or you might combine them into a single epic nautical campaign as your players traverse the entire span of quests from the beginning to what may be a bitter, watery end.

“The Saltmarsh series consistently ranks as one of the most popular classic D&D adventures,” says Mike Mearls, Franchise Creative Director of D&D. “With its ties to ocean-based adventuring, it was an obvious step to augment it with additional sea-based adventures and a robust set of rules for managing a nautical campaign.”

For now, let's dive (pun intended) into the first of these adventures, *Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*:

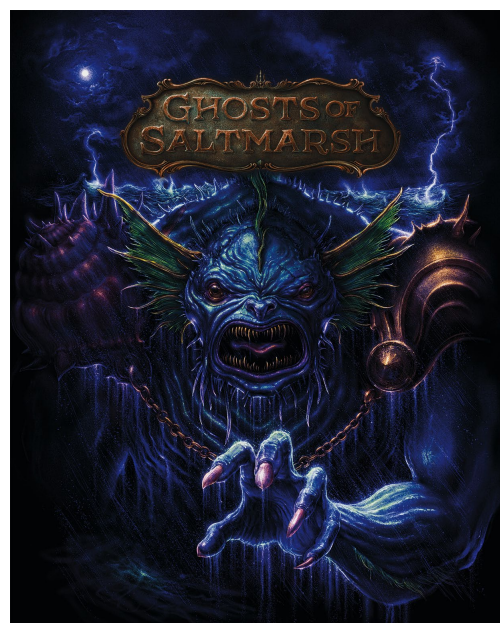
Speaking of spoilers, Don Turnbull—Managing Director of TSR Hobbies (UK) Ltd.—provided clues of this adventure back in 1981's *Fiend Folio*. Writing in the epilogue, he hinted: “It may be appropriate here to say that, though this is the first British contribution to the advancement of Dungeons & Dragons and Advanced Dungeons & Dragons games, it will certainly be far from the last. TSR Hobbies (UK) Limited has plans!”

*U1: Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* was released that same year, written by Turnbull and Dave J. Brown. And there in the preface Don added: “I said that TSR Hobbies (UK) Limited had plans, and this module represents the first fruit of those plans. We sincerely hope you like it and the others which will follow.”

He went on to warn American readers about the module's use of British English: “If you find the text too flowery and florid or too plain and stilted, the structure of the language slightly unusual, the use of certain words apparently slightly off-beat, these are the reasons.” And from there, the module kicked off a three-part series of adventures centering around the little seaside town of Saltmarsh; the first part of which concerned a reported haunted house awaiting investigation at the edge of town:

“Desolate and abandoned, the evil alchemist's mansion stands alone on the cliff, looking out towards the sea. Mysterious lights and ghostly hauntings have kept away the people of Saltmarsh, despite rumors of a fabulous forgotten treasure. What is its sinister secret?”

Digging a little further into this mystery reveals the start of the house's legend:



Alternative cover by N.C. Winters  
(Select to view)



“Four miles east of Saltmarsh, just inland of the old coast road, stands a haunted house. Until twenty years ago, it had been the residence of an aged alchemist of sinister reputation. Even then, locals avoided the house because of its owner’s mysterious activities. Now, two decades after the unexplained disappearance of its occupant, the house has taken on an even greater air of evil and mystery.

“Dilapidated and long abandoned, the house presents an unwholesome appearance to the eye. Those hardy souls who have on infrequent occasion sought entry to it (rumors of a secret hoard of alchemical gold have persisted since the old man’s disappearance) all returned with naught save grim tales of decaying chambers presided over by monstrous perils. Indeed, such is the reputation of the house that the fields around it, though prime agricultural land, remain untended and rank with weeds....”

Whether you consider the above too flowery and florid, too plain and stilted, or just fine, the stage is set! Next issue we’ll offer a deeper look at further adventure content, but until then here are a few pieces of interior art to further welcome you to Saltmarsh!

## 1. Entering Saltmarsh

### Zoltan Boros

Four adventurers arrive at the plain gate of Saltmarsh, a small fishing town with simple stone and wood buildings. The town is near a cliff overlooking the sea. A modestly armored guard at the gate holds up her hand, asking the adventurers to stop. Storm clouds gather overhead.



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## 2. Town Council

### Zoltan Boros

Three town councilors argue over

a table covered in evidence. The table displays items such as papers, weapons, and a lizardfolk shield.



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### 3. At the Mansion

#### **Sidharth Chaturvedi**

Two adventurers walk with trepidation on the weathered wooden porch of a decrepit old mansion, which sits on a cliff far above the ocean. A shadowy figure peers out at the party from an upstairs window whose shutters have nearly rotted away.

As for the remaining adventures? We'll preview them further down the line, but for now, here's a bit on each from their original descriptions. Original adventure designers listed below; fifth edition design updates primarily handled by Wolfgang Baur, Jon Sawatsky, and Steve Winter.



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### **Danger at Dunwater (Designed by Dave J. Browne and Don Turnbull)**

The little fishing town of Saltmarsh is threatened! Why are lizardfolk gathering force nearby and why have they been buying large quantities of weapons? A party of bold adventurers must answer these questions or the people of Saltmarsh will never live in peace!

### **The Final Enemy (Designed by Dave J. Browne and Don Turnbull)**

At last, an opportunity to avert the threat to the little town of

Saltmarsh! The real enemies have been identified—evil, cruel creatures, massed in force and viciously organized. Can the brave adventurers thwart this evil and ensure the safety of Saltmarsh?

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**Isle of the Abbey (Designed by Randy Maxwell, originally published in *Dungeon* magazine #34)**

Nothing living guards this island—that's the problem.

**Tammeraunt's Fate (Designed by Greg A. Vaughn, originally published in *Dungeon* magazine #106)**

A sunken ship, an island hermitage, and martial arts zombies give your heroes the fright of their lives.

**The Styes (Designed by Richard Pett, originally published in *Dungeon* magazine #121)**

Once, the Styes was the ocean gateway to a major city, her magnificent buildings crowning a man-made island held aloft on piers and boardwalks. Now it has grown old and diseased, a perfect haven for sadists, cultists, and hungry things that flop and writhe.

**Salvage Operation (Designed by Mike Mearls, originally published in *Dungeon* magazine #123)**

Years ago, a merchant's fortunes collapsed when a ship filled with his wares vanished on the high seas. Four days ago the ship was spotted again, listing terribly and adrift at sea. Will your adventurers help the merchant recover the sinking derelict? Are they prepared for what lurks within?

***Ghosts of Saltmarsh* will be released on May 21, 2019 with an MSRP of \$49.95. An alternate art cover with a distinctive design and soft-touch finish is available exclusively in game stores on the same day. Codename Entertainment's Chris Dupuis will be running several games of *Salvage Operation* at Gary Con XI, which takes place March 7-10, 2019 in Lake Geneva, WI.**

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WIZKIDS, DUNGEON OF THE MAD MAGE BOARD GAME

The newest entry into the

Dungeons & Dragons Adventure

System series sees players

journeying through the Yawning

Portal into Undermountain to take



on the creatures and quests that lie within.

The game is campaign-based, with a variety of adventures to experience, but any adventure can also be played as a one-shot. Each player will choose one of five different heroes as they take on these exciting, often difficult, but ultimately rewarding adventures.



©2018 Wizards of the Coast

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As always, this game can be combined with the other games in the *Dungeons & Dragons Adventure System* series to create unique and one-of-a kind adventures that will leave heroes hungry for more!

***Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage Adventure System Board Game*** is for one-to-five players aged 14 and above, and will be released in August 2019 with an MSRP of \$79.99. A Premium Edition version including forty-two pre-painted miniatures will also be available with an MSRP of \$159.99.


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#### UPDATED BASIC RULES

Jeremy Crawford discussed his work updating the D&D Basic Rules on our recent *Dragon+* livestreams:

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[Learn more](#)



Essentially, the Basic Rules for Dungeons & Dragons covers the core elements of the tabletop game—and it's now been updated with the latest errata and combined into a single PDF document for ease of use.

The Basic Rules runs from levels 1 to 20 of the game, and is divided into four parts:

**Part 1** is about character creation, providing the rules and guidance you need to make the character you'll play in the game. It includes information on the various races, classes, backgrounds, equipment, and other customization options you can choose from.

**Part 2** details the rules of how to play the game, beyond the basics described in this introduction. It covers the kinds of die rolls you make to determine success or failure at the tasks your character attempts, and describes the three broad categories of activity in the game: exploration, interaction, and combat.

**Part 3** is all about magic. It covers the nature of magic in the worlds of D&D, the rules for spellcasting, and a selection of typical spells available to magic-using characters (and monsters) in the game.

**Part 4** is about tools for Dungeon Masters. It includes information and stat blocks for monsters, advice for building combat encounters, and magic items.

But the best part? The Basic Rules is a free PDF. Anyone can download it using the link provided here or from our website.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

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STRANGER THINGS DUNGEONS & DRAGONS STARTER SET  
Prepare for just about anything, because the game just got stranger! This set contains everything players need to embark on a *Stranger Things* campaign, including the essential rules of the D&D roleplaying game and an adventure written in the style of the show's Dungeon Master, Mike Wheeler (played by Finn Wolfhard).

Pick your character: will you be Will the Wise or Dustin the Dwarf? Get your fireballs ready as you investigate the mysterious castle and battle the ferocious Demogorgon (with two exclusive Demogorgon figures—one paintable—provided in the box). Alongside Mike’s adventure and the D&D rulebook, the box contains five Stranger Things character sheets and six dice. The Stranger Things Dungeons & Dragons Starter Set is available at major retailers from May 1, 2019 and can be pre-ordered online now.



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## ONE WORLD KILL BY MARK LAWRENCE

“I was pulled into the world and the tale,” says author **Robin Hobb** (the *Farseer trilogy*, the *Soldier Son trilogy*) as she describes Mark Lawrence’s book *One Word Kill*. “Go find it and read it. I think you’ll love it.” She awards *One Word Kill* a whopping six-stars, which is an impressive score given that Good Reads’ review system only goes up to five!





Author Mark Lawrence

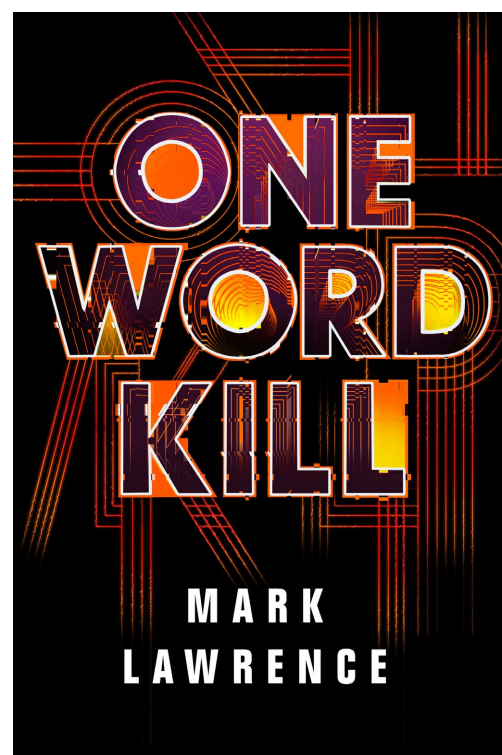
Lawrence already has nine published books under his belt, all of which have been swords and sorcery fantasy novels. This opening book in the *Impossible Times* trilogy is the first to blend in elements of his real life, but he says each of his novels is personal to him.

” *One Word Kill*, being set in the real world and moreover in the time and place that I grew up—’80s London—is bound to have more overlap with my experience,” he tells *Dragon+*. “But on the other hand, I would say that all of my books are personal since the emotional core of them, which I feel is the most important element, draws on my experience in a variety of ways. Any book will feel personal to the author who wrote it.”

Lawrence first played Dungeons & Dragons in 1977 when a Games Workshop store opened a hundred yards from his new school. In *One Word Kill*, the gaming sessions serve as a kind of distorting mirror to the real world plot and had to be crafted in fiction rather than lifted from his own table.

“D&D was a huge part of growing

up for me, and I have translated the quality of those experiences onto the page in the *Impossible Times* trilogy. But there is no direct mapping of the games I played or the people I played them with, just the general vibe,” he says, revealing that he’s still in touch with the friends he played with to varying degrees. “We are spread across the globe now. One of them has won three Oscars for special effects work, another runs a travel agency that specializes in African holidays, another lives in the U.S. in the state I was born in and mans a customer helpline for a



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company that makes everything from food mixers to body bags. One was the daughter of a lord—who was also a rear admiral—and went to live in the Netherlands and now works for an insurance company.”

Without spoiling the plot of *One Word Kill*, Lawrence draws upon his twenty years as a research scientist and plumbs his knowledge of quantum mechanics to provide an interesting conundrum for his lead character. However, it turns out discussions of causality and split universes have not been a regular topic of conversation in his day job.

“Very few of us graduating from a physics degree ever find ourselves called upon to use what we learned on our quantum mechanics courses again,” he says with a laugh. “Unless, as in my case, we are called upon to help our children taking a similar course decades later. That’s when scientists discover we have forgotten all the mechanical parts and just remember the cool stuff! My contact with the more mind-blowing elements of science has been maintained purely through general interest and a subscription to *New Scientist* magazine.”

***One Word Kill* is released on Amazon in hardcover on 1, April 2019 and in paperback and for Kindle on 1, May 2019.**

## IDLE CHAMPIONS OF THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

Members of Penny Arcade’s “C” Team have already become key figures in Idle Champions of the Forgotten Realms and another fan-favorite from the Acquisitions Incorporated franchise is about to join the roster. Kate Welch’s Rosie Beestinger is being added to the idle strategy video game, alongside Holly Conrad’s Strix, Kris Straub’s K’thriss and Ryan Hartman’s Donaar Blit’zen.

“It’s so cool to get to work with Idle Champions to add Rosie to their roster!” Welch tells *Dragon+*. “They’ve done an incredible job with K’thriss and Donaar, so I knew they’d treat Rosie right. They’ve been awesome about taking feedback and are very committed to making Rosie as Rosie as possible. I’m trying to get them to make her super OP, but we’ll see what happens.”

Rosie’s character makes her introduction as part of the same *Idle Champions* event that introduced Conrad’s character in 2018. The pair have become even closer since the special **Waffles Inc** crossover event, where Asmodeus retconned Strix’s history and made her an adopted child of Kate’s character.



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“Last year we released Holly Conrad’s Strix at the Festival of Fools and when we looked at bringing more “C” Team characters into the game, we knew bringing together Rosie and Strix for the same event would lead to some really exciting moments.” reveals Chris Dupuis, Live Services Manager at Codename Entertainment.



“We’re calling this the Beestinger Campaign internally, and the really exciting part is that we can do some unique stuff with one of Rosie’s variants. Normally event variants run through the same adventure and introduce a thematic limiting factor or something that changes up the strategy of the formation. For one of Rosie’s variants, we’re going to limit the formation so you can only use Rosie and Strix—no other champions will be available.”

“Strix is always trying to help others, so having Rosie and the Waffle Crew in the game is awesome!” says Conrad. “Rosie can probably get Strix to do things she’s not used to doing, sort of how a grandmother tells a kid to try a new food they don’t like. Maybe she can teach Strix how to use her staff to block people? Or to cry less? Strix also looks up to her immensely, probably because she’s way less terrified of Rosie than her last grandmother, Baba Yaga.”

“On top of that, I’m working closely with Kate and Holly to come up with unique dialogue for the adventure,” adds Dupuis. “The entire variant will be a conversation between the two Beestingers and I think fans of Rosie and Strix are going to love it!”

Rosie’s in-game abilities will also reflect that she’s not your typical grandma. “She’s a sassy, missile catching, jacked grandma who has a bunch of adopted kids,” says Dupuis, “and we wanted to make sure that came across in her design.”

Two of the abilities we can reveal are:

**Sassy.** Rosie increases her damage for every Champion in the formation younger than she is.

**Busy Beestinger.** Her attack cooldown is lowered by 0.5 seconds for every member of The “C” Team in the formation. When she gets her crew with her, she’ll be bouncing all around the screen!

The Festival of Fools Y2 event launches in-game on Wednesday March 20 and runs until Monday April 1, 2019. “Having the final week of the event overlap PAX East is super exciting for us,” says Dupuis. “We were on-hand at PAX South last month when we launched K’thriss and the fans were super excited to unlock him and add him to their formations!”

The Festival of Fools Y2 event launches in-game on Wednesday March 20 and runs until Monday April 1, 2019. “Having the final week of the event overlap PAX East is super exciting for us,” says Dupuis. “We were on-hand at PAX South last month during the Midwinter event where we launched K’thriss and the fans were super excited to unlock him and gear him up!”

**Visit the *Idle Champions of the Forgotten Realms* website or follow [Kate Welch on Twitter](#) for more details on Rosie Beestinger’s addition to the game.**

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## RICK & MORTY VS DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

IDW’s killer crossover comic saw two pop-culture juggernauts team up! Now all four issues of the monthly title are being collected together in a trade paperback and neither multiverse is prepared for what comes next.

In celebration of this release, we asked writers Jim Zub and Patrick Rothfuss to pick their favorite episodes of the Emmy Award-winning *Rick & Morty* TV series.

“Trying to think about what my absolute favorite episodes are is so hard because I think in terms of particular moments that are so potent and insane. Those are the things that really stick with me,” says Zub. “So I’d choose *Meeseeks and Destroy*, that kind of absolutely bonkers cascading disaster that unfolds as they command Mr. Meeseeks to help them. I love that what seems like a very basic idea starts to fold in on itself geometrically and continues to do so at an exponential rate. That’s the kind of stuff that makes me laugh. Almost no other medium outside of animation can pay that off at such an insane level and make it look effortless.”





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“There are funny episodes as a whole but what makes me love the show is a series of startlingly emotional moments that hit in the middle of this ridiculous, ultra-violent, sci-fi nonsense,” add Rothfuss. “So *Pickle Rick* is a fun episode. It’s neat. But the best part, the diamond at the heart that episode, is the 65-second monologue the therapist has at the end when she talks to Rick.

“That episode won an Emmy not because the writers very cleverly showed how Rick can go from being a pickle to being a ninja, killer pickle. That’s funny, but the Emmy was for that moment where the therapist strips every bit of skin off Rick Sanchez and pins him down onto a card like a butterfly.

“I remember watching it and thinking about the reactions of people watching street magic. If surprising or startling, unnatural things happen, the audience will always bring their hands up to their face and cover it. It’s a weird, instinctive reaction we have as a response to something that’s scaring us in some way. As she delivered that monologue I remember moving back and my hands were coming up to cover my face. There’s no malice but she is brutalizing this man. And I’m like, ‘Are they doing this?’ I was so stunned that it was happening.”

**IDW’s trade paperback of *Rick and Morty Vs. Dungeons & Dragons* is available from March 12, 2019 and can be [pre-ordered here](#) .**

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#### FOR FANS BY FANS D&D COMPETITIONS

Fan Forge is an open gallery allowing artists to submit their designs and be rated by the community for the chance to become real, officially-licensed products. Selected artwork earns a commission per item sold on the website, through wholesale and at conventions.

The site’s latest fan art contest is looking for merchandise that will appeal to devotees of D&D. As well as earning commission on the sale of products featuring their work, winners can also take home prizes courtesy of Ten Speed Press/Penguin Random House.



The grand prize is a copy of the *Special Edition Box Set* of *Dungeons & Dragons Art & Arcana: A Visual History*, including ephemera and a poster featuring art by Hydro74 (who is acting as a special guest judge for the event!). Nine runners up also win a copy of *Art & Arcana*, plus the Hydro74 poster.

Artists are asked to submit their original works before the deadline on March 15, 2019. Dungeons & Dragons enthusiasts can vote during this time on the designs that they would like to see become real products!

Check out **the contest page** for full details or email [artists@forfansbyfans.com](mailto:artists@forfansbyfans.com) directly if you have further questions about the competition.

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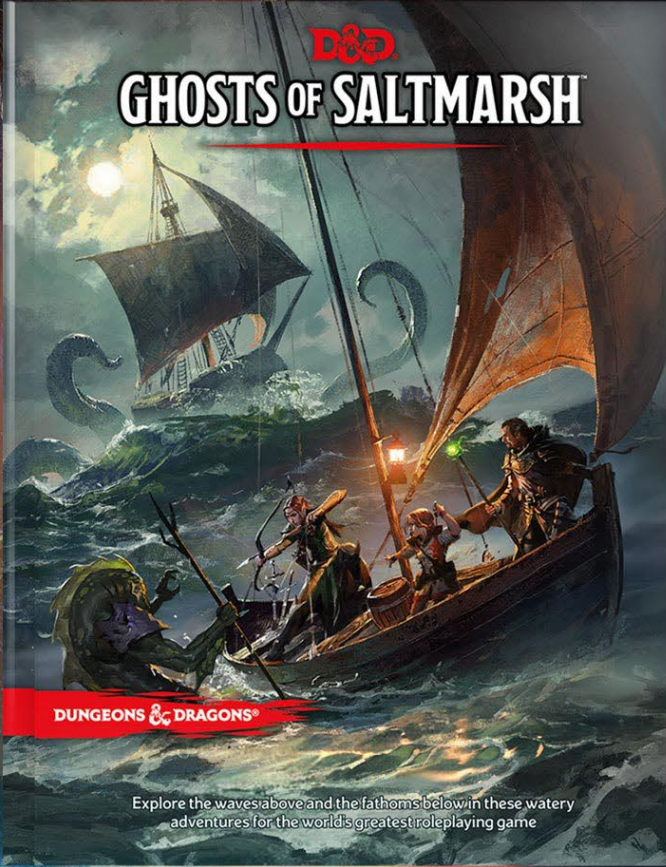
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# ADVENTURE *ON THE* HIGH SEAS



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## A Darkened Wish

Writer and livestreamer B. Dave Walters is busy putting the final touches to a new Dungeons & Dragons comic for IDW. And he'll be bringing those characters to life in more ways than one...

If you're a fan of fantasy gaming livestreams, chances are you already know B. Dave Walters. He first ventured onto Geek & Sundry back in August 2017 as the co-host of *Ask Your Black Geek Friend*, alongside his buddy Damian Poitier. Promoting *Encounters in Port Nyanzaru* on the DMs Guild then introduced him to Satine Phoenix, who invited him to play *Vampire the Masquerade* as part of *ChariD20* in 2017. It turned out to be a major turning point in his life.

"That was my first time playing on stream, and after that things really took off," he remembers. "I did *Inkwell Society* and *We're Alive: Frontier*. Then I did *Theogony of Kairos* and soon after that *We're Alive Season Two*, before *Vampire: The Masquerade L.A. By Night* kicked in, and all kinds of amazing stuff has since happened."

At *Dragon+* we were aware of Walters' work long before he stepped

in front of a camera, because the first story he ever sent off for publication was to *Dragon* magazine.

“I guess I must have been thirteen when I submitted that story because that’s when I started playing D&D. I had my elven fighter/mage/thief. This was back when it was second edition and you were calculating THACO and there was Bend Bars and Lift Gates percentages,” he recalls.

“In retrospect, that very first story was objectively terrible. The fact that I’m now in *Dragon* magazine and writing D&D stories—these are dreams come true, so hang in there!”

WATCH ON TWITCH

## Crossing the Streams

Even if you haven’t crossed Walters’ streaming path yet, you’re about to. When *Dragon+* calls him at his home in Los Angeles he’s got his figurative potion book in one hand and a bunch of ingredients in the other, as he works on a new livestream game based on the D&D comic he’s writing for IDW: “We have a lot of ingredients sitting in canisters, completely separated. Possibly in different rooms of the house, possibly in different houses. The reagents of the spell are coming together.”

The first promotional cover for the comic book featured images of younger versions of the main characters alongside their older selves. Walters confirms that the story in the comic is generational and will follow these characters from when they are teenagers. So it’s interesting to discover the point in their lives the streamed adventures will find them.

“I never really express how old they are in the book, but we follow them from around fifteen-ish years-old to being roughly in their forties, so it is decades across. The stream will focus on a specific adventure they go on and will be something that actually happens to them in the middle of their lives. It’ll be kind of a prequel that should help inform some of the later things that happen in the comic. If things work out the way I hope, the prequel is going to stream before I finish writing all the books so they should intertwine,” he says.



“Transmedia storytelling is a particular passion of mine and I very much believe that’s where the industry’s going. I’d like to be one of the first ones to really do something particularly interesting with it. Even during the infancy of the project when I was first approached about the comic book I suggested doing a streaming tie-in. So these ideas were born in tandem.”

That cross media experience has been made even easier because Walters already thinks of his cast as fully realized characters. Not only has he had to spec them out to include them as characters in the livestream, he had already made character sheets to help bring them realistically to life in the comic book.

“Obviously the comic book uses a very different vocabulary to the game,” he explains. “But I wanted to make sure I was being accurate in my portrayal of what characters of those class and level were capable of. Even though in the story they will never say things such as, ‘I’ve gained another level and now can cast *fireball*,’ I had to be aware that’s how they’re experiencing Faerûn.”

## Steeped in Tradition

“I’m honored to be able to contribute a link into the chain of the Forgotten Realms,” Walters says humbly of his comic and web series crossover. A stickler for research, he discovered something cool while investigating the subject matter for the comic: the very first novel set in the Forgotten Realms took place in the Moonshae Isles.

“In many ways *Darkwalker on Moonshae* is where this all started. It was written as a standalone fantasy novel that TSR purchased and placed into the Forgotten Realms,” he says.



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“But it wasn’t my original intention to set the narrative in Moonshae because I wanted to explore a completely new corner of the Realms. Then the pendulum swung the other way and IDW suggested setting it in Waterdeep. I didn’t want to be beholden to 50 years of continuity because there’s some pretty well-worn territory there. And if I set a story in Waterdeep I can’t burn the city to the ground. If I do, it’s got to be repaired by the end of the narrative.”

Walters’ solution was to set the comic book somewhere recognizable but where his interpretation could be a little freer. That put the Moonshae Isles back into contention and he promises that hidden away in his tales are many nods to its old stories.

“I am now a scholar of the history of the Isles, the Kendrick family and what happened when. My hope is that when people read this narrative and interact with some of these characters—both from the book and from the stream—they’re going to want to go back and find out where they came from and will be motivated to seek out those old stories.

“There’s some posts driven into the ground. I quite intentionally set the book during certain iconic events and my characters are there to witness them happen. I then took characters from classic stories and aged some of them, while other characters from some upcoming stories I made younger. It was neat to have them crossing over in some of the same places.”

## Different Kind of Drama

Writing is only half of the job of creating a kick-ass comic and although Walters hasn’t worked with artist Tess Fowler before, he’s full of praise for her efforts. He’d met her as part of the Critical Role community, and when Walters was asked to write a comic book in summer 2018 he asked if she was interested in doing the art.

“It was a drama comic. She read it



(Select to view)

and said, ‘I like it. It’s great. But it’s not my thing. If it turns out that the hero’s been a werewolf the entire time or the best friend is a robot, call me.’ And that was cool, no problem. Then a few months later she hit me up out of the blue and asked, ‘Are you interested in writing a D&D book?’ I literally said, ‘Stop right there!’ That was the extent of the conversation. Then it all took off.”

Working as two halves of a project, it’s important for the story and the visuals to be in sync. Walters cannot say enough good things about the pages Fowler has turned out as we ask about their collaboration.

“She is phenomenal. I knew that she has wanted to do this as long as I’ve wanted to do it so I asked her were there things she really wanted to see? There were a few scenes and a couple of characters she requested I include. The book also starts with a big battle scene—it’s going down. I made a point on those early pages to have some panels with no words at all because I wanted to give Tess’s art room to breathe to really dig into the visceral intensity of what’s going on. Tone-wise this is very intense—definitely more *Lord of the Rings* than Saturday morning D&D cartoons—and her art really makes it feel as if they’re fighting for their lives.

“I also often left room for her to interpret things. I might say,





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‘They’re attacked by bandits’ rather than ‘They’re attacked by twelve bandits: four trolls, two orcs, six hobgoblins. The first hobgoblin has a limp, the third has a monocle. So help me, he better have his monocle!’ What she came back with consistently blew me away and exceeded my expectations.”

Each issue of the comic book will also offer variant covers, with artist **Ibrahem Swaid** providing those choices. But the ultimate compliment for Fowler’s art is that D&D fans are already talking about creating cosplays based on

the work that has currently been released.

“The first time I see anybody dressed as any of the characters, I’m going to die,” Walters gushes. “The first time I see a full group cosplay, again, I’m going to drop to my knees, weeping joyful tears. They probably won’t even know who I am. They’ll be like, who is this dude and why is he crying at our feet? I’m really looking forward to having that experience.”

## World Beating

While Walters knows the high-quality art will be a feast for the eyes, he also hopes his storytelling skills can deliver an inclusive tale readers will love.

“I like that writing stories allows us to reflect on what it is that makes us all human and what it is that makes us all the same,” he explains. “I think the reason I’m so passionate about diversity and inclusion is everyone needs to be able to see themselves reflected in the media. They need to see themselves reflected in both a heroic light and a villainous light so they have something to aspire to and something to

turn away from.



“I realize it’s a difficult time for a lot of people but when you can take an adventure and forget about the world for a few minutes, that’s important. I’m hoping that people are going to read this book and laugh, smile, cry, yell, and throw issues across the room. Buckle up, because this is going to be quite a ride.”

With Walters in charge, we’re also expecting the livestream to deliver a similarly epic experience. That’s if we can get him out of the bathroom before it starts...



“I wouldn’t say I get nervous before a show but that’s not one hundred per cent true,” he admits. “There’s a running gag that I always have to go to the bathroom five minutes before we start. It never fails. I could go to the bathroom ten minutes before and I will still have to go again five minutes before we start rolling. That’s how the nerves manifest for me.”

Having experienced a number of different tones of livestreams featuring the writer, what can the audience expect from this one?

” *We’re Alive* is very gritty and intense, while *Vampire: the Masquerade, L.A. by Night* is very stylized but still dark and dangerous. *Theogony of Kairos* was a high-powered level twenty adventure, which was near and dear to my heart. With the comic book I went for a *Lord of the Rings* tone but for the stream we’re going to have a *Game of Thrones* tone. There will be some light-hearted moments but it’s not going to be silly.”

***A Darkened Wish* is available for pre-order now at your local comic-book store or through [ComiXology](#). Issue one and connected *A Darkened Wish* live-stream game will both arrive in March 2019.**

**You can also connect with B. Dave Walters [on Twitter](#) and see more of Tess Fowler’s artwork [on her official site](#).**

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# Quirks & Foibles

Quirks and foibles are random odd and unique traits for your character. Everyone has odd quirks, it's what makes us each unique! Celebrate the uniqueness of your character by grabbing a D100 and rolling twice on the Quirks & Foibles chart. If you don't like a result, feel free to re-roll... it's all done in the name of fun!

- |                      |                      |                   |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Broken Nose       | 29. Fear of Swamps   | 57. Bad Sailor    | 85. Axebeak Mount    |
| 2. Major Scar        | 30. Fear of Witches  | 58. Bad Cook      | 86. Stag Mount       |
| 3. Bad Limp          | 31. Fear of Ghosts   | 59. Bad Tailor    | 87. Faerie Companion |
| 4. Missing Eye       | 32. Fear of Undead   | 60. Bad Poet      | 88. Imp Companion    |
| 5. Missing Hand      | 33. Fear of Demons   | 61. Bad Scholar   | 89. Kobold Friend    |
| 6. Collects Gems     | 34. Fear of Devils   | 62. Bad Haggler   | 90. Talking Skull    |
| 7. Collects Bugs     | 35. Twitchy          | 63. Bad Tattooist | 91. Talking Item     |
| 8. Collects Knives   | 36. Loud Talker      | 64. Bad Tracker   | 92. Ghost Companion  |
| 9. Collects Pipes    | 37. Repeats Self     | 65. Pet Rock      | 93. Vestigial Twin   |
| 10. Collects Maps    | 38. Slow Talker      | 66. Pet Firefly   | 94. Owns Brewery     |
| 11. Collects Books   | 39. Fast Talker      | 67. Pet Spider    | 95. Owns Smithy      |
| 12. Collects Legends | 40. Slovenly         | 68. Pet Newt      | 96. Owns Pub/Tavern  |
| 13. Collects Dolls   | 41. Very Hairy       | 69. Pet Toad      | 97. Owns Small Tower |
| 14. Collects Rings   | 42. Fancy Hair       | 70. Pet Lizard    | 98. Owns Small Keep  |
| 15. Fear of Darkness | 43. Foppish          | 71. Pet Snake     | 99. Owns Ship/Boat   |
| 16. Fear of Caverns  | 44. Interrupter      | 72. Pet Turtle    | 100. Owns Airship    |
| 17. Fear of Heights  | 45. Crazy Accent     | 73. Pet Songbird  |                      |
| 18. Fear of Slime    | 46. Suave            | 74. Pet Chicken   |                      |
| 19. Fear of Blood    | 47. Evil Twin        | 75. Pet Parrot    |                      |
| 20. Fear of Insects  | 48. Bad Musician     | 76. Pet Pigeon    |                      |
| 21. Fear of Fish     | 49. Bad Singer       | 77. Pet Crow      |                      |
| 22. Fear of Reptiles | 50. Bad Dancer       | 78. Pet Falcon    |                      |
| 23. Fear of Birds    | 51. Bad Storyteller  | 79. Pet Owl       |                      |
| 24. Fear of Fire     | 52. Bad Juggler      | 80. Pet Pig       |                      |
| 25. Fear of Water    | 53. Bad Gambler      | 81. Pet Fey Drake |                      |
| 26. Fear of Canines  | 54. Bad Cartographer | 82. Goat Mount    |                      |
| 27. Fear of Felines  | 55. Bad Actor        | 83. Mule Mount    |                      |
| 28. Fear of Horses   | 56. Bad Painter      | 84. Boar Mount    |                      |





## WHAZZIT THE QUASIT

Quasits infest the Lower Planes. Physically weak, they keep to the shadows to plot mischief and wickedness. More powerful demons use quasits as spies and messengers when they aren't devouring them or pulling them apart to pass the time.

In ages past, a bone devil gained the services of a particularly ambitious quasit named Whazzit, which was looking to escape the typical fate of its kind. With Whazzit's help, the bone devil conquered the lost laboratory of Kwalish and converted it into a monastery dedicated to its own dark cult, becoming the monastery's Grand Master. But the devil eventually met its demise investigating Kwalish's grand experiments, and its infernal life force was drawn into powerful extraplanar machinery. (Full details on the Grand Master can be found in *Lost Laboratory of Kwalish*.)



Whazzit survived—and quickly saw opportunity. The quasit managed to construct an elaborate war machine based on Kwalish's designs, using the bone devil's exoskeleton as its framework. The tiny fiend then kept up an elaborate ruse for years, piloting this exoskeleton as it pretended to be the Grand Master.

**Infernal Plotting.** Whazzit can assume a number of beast forms, but in its true form, it looks like a two-foot-tall green humanoid with horns. The quasit has grafted tiny shards of the bone devil's exoskeleton onto its own body for added protection, and has incorporated a stinger into its tail stolen from a rival—the imp known as Subknock. The imp in turn stole Whazzit's original set of necrotic claws, a theft that still fills the quasit with rage.

### WHAZZIT

Tiny fiend (demon, shapeshifter), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 14 (natural)

**Hit Points** 15 (6d4)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (−3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Shapeshifter.** Whazzit can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles an oversized wasp (speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.), a scorpion (40 ft., climb 40 ft.), or a skeletal toad (40 ft., swim 40 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Magic Resistance.** Whazzit has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Sting (Bite in Toad Form).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Scare (1/Day).** One creature of Whazzit's choice within 20 feet of it must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Whazzit is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Invisibility.** Whazzit magically turns invisible until it attacks or uses Scare, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Whazzit wears or carries is invisible with it.



Like its imp rival, Whazzit is a rather accomplished inventor, especially when it comes to devices of warfare and torture. If the Grand Master is defeated and its ruse revealed, Whazzit claims to know of further gear and items hidden in the lower recesses of the Monastery of the Distressed Body, beneath the central abbey. It might offer to serve as a familiar to a new master who joins it in exploring the lower reaches of the monastery. However, in all such cases, Whazzit is principally interested in regaining control of the monastery for itself, or establishing a new laboratory for its own dark experiments.

Whazzit is also motivated to seek vengeance against its imp rival. The two are rumored to keep in contact with each other, with both sending emissaries and assassins against one another via the planar gates located in the Monastery of the Distressed Body and Kwalish's newer laboratory in Daoine Gloine.

**Familiar.** Whazzit might serve another creature as a familiar, forming a telepathic bond with its willing master. While the two are bonded, the master can sense what Whazzit senses as long as they are within 1 mile of each other. While Whazzit is within 10 feet of its master, the master gains proficiency with two sets of artisan's tools of the master's choice: alchemist's supplies, cartographer's tools, jeweler's tools, leatherworker's tools, smith's tools, or tinker's tools, determined when first bonded. At any time and for any reason, Whazzit can end its service as a familiar, ending the telepathic bond.

Whazzit is likely to serve only spellcasters of 7th level or higher and of evil alignment, or who can grant the quasit access to materials and resources to further its own experiments.

## SUBKNOCK THE IMP

Imps are found throughout the Lower Planes, either running errands for their infernal masters, spying on rivals, or misleading and waylaying mortals. An imp will proudly serve an evil master of any kind, but it can't be relied on to carry out tasks with any speed or efficiency.

Among the many former masters of the imp known as Subknock was the bone devil that would later invade Kwalish's lost laboratory, installing itself as the Grand Master of the Monastery of the Distressed Body. Long before those events, however, a quasit fought the shiftless Subknock for the right to serve the bone devil, becoming its new assistant and sharing in its triumphs. (Full details on the Grand Master can be found in *Lost Laboratory of Kwalish*.)

**Thwarted Ambition.** Subknock can assume beast form at will, but in its natural state, it resembles a diminutive red-skinned humanoid with small horns and leathery wings. It bears a set of special necrotic claws

stolen from its rival, the quasit Whazzit. The quasit in turn stole and now bears Subknock's barbed stinger tail.

Like its quasit rival, Subknock is a rather accomplished inventor, especially when it comes to devices of warfare and torture. To further its ambitions, it might offer to serve as a familiar to a new master. Even if it does, however, Subknock is principally interested in gaining control of Daoine Gloine, the site of Kwalish's newer lost laboratory, or in establishing another suitable laboratory for its own dark experiments.

Subknock is also motivated to seek vengeance against its quasit rival. The two are rumored to keep in contact with each other, with both sending emissaries and assassins against one another via the planar gates located in the Monastery of the Distressed Body and in Daoine Gloine.

**Familiar.** Subknock might serve another creature as a familiar, forming a telepathic bond with its willing





master. While the two are bonded, the master can sense what Subknock senses as long as they are within 1 mile of each other. While Subknock is within 10 feet of its master, the master gains proficiency with two sets of artisan's tools of the master's choice: alchemist's supplies, carpenter's tools, glassblower's tools, mason's tools, smith's tools, or tinker's tools, determined when first bonded. At any time and for any reason, Subknock can end its service as a familiar, ending the telepathic bond.

Subknock is likely to serve only spellcasters of 7th level or higher and of evil alignment, or who can grant the imp access to materials and resources to further its own experiments.

## SUBKNOCK

*Tiny fiend (devil, shapechanger), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 21 (6d4 + 6)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Shapechanger.** Subknock can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a stuffed toy rat (speed 20 ft.), a papercraft raven (20 ft., fly 60 ft.), or a clockwork spider (20 ft., climb 20 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede Subknock's darkvision.

**Magic Resistance.** Subknock has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Claws of Wounding (Bite in Rat or Spider Form).** *Melee*

**Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. Once per turn, when Subknock hits a creature using this attack, it can wound the target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1 necrotic damage for each time it's been wounded, and it can then make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, ending this wounded effect on itself on a success. Alternatively, the wounded creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it, can use an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, ending this wounded effect on the wounded creature on a success.

**Invisibility.** Subknock magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Subknock wears or carries is invisible with it.



# BEAR WITH ME

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE

illustrations by William O'Conner

## PICTURE THIS:

*A nice house on a quiet street mere blocks from the elementary school.*

*Inside this lovely house lives a seven-year-old girl who gets to have a bowl of ice cream every night before bed. In fact, she insists on it. Her toy box runneth over with coveted Barbie dolls sporting the G.I. Jane haircut she gave them mere minutes after acquiring them. Books spill off her shelves, and her closet is full of monogrammed sweaters she likes to color coordinate with whale-and-heart-patterned turtle necks. She can watch all the television she wants, even in her bedroom. But noooo, that is not enough. She wants more.*

*"Please may I have a dog?" she inquires.*

Oh okay, enough of this crap. The girl is me, and I certainly never inquired. It was more like pleading, begging, rationalizing, and reasoning. But it was all for naught. Ever since she was chased home by a Boston Terrier when she was three, Judy's sworn off anything with whiskers and fur.

"Absolutely not," she'd say. "Don't ask me again."

"But Mooooooooooooooooom," I whined. "I'll die if I don't get a dog!"

Mom said I was more than welcome to have a hundred dogs when I was grown up and no longer living in her home. Then she'd send me away to go play with my hermit crab.

But I *really* wanted a dog. Like, cried every time a character on TV called their dog. Like, meandered away from Mom in the grocery store to pull bags of Alpo off the store shelves and drag them to the cashier. Like, take my stuffed animal dogs for walks around the neighborhood, scratching their heads and cooing sweet nothings into their stuffed ears. (I know. Weird.)

And yet fiberfill was so unfulfilling. So I did what any not-quite-normal seven-year-old would do. I gave myself a dog.

Enter Woofie, my ageless, loyal German Shepherd companion. Woofie and I spent all day together playing fetch in the front yard, practicing tricks in



the living room, curling up with a Nancy Drew book under my canopy bed. He walked me to school every morning and I made a big production out of sending him home when I got to the crossing guard outside of school.

"Go home, Woofie," I commanded. "See you at lunch time! We're having liverwurst!" (I loved liverwurst, which to me was even weirder than talking to an imaginary dog.)

"Who you talking to, dear?" Miss Eleanor, the crossing guard would ask.

"Duh," I answered. "My dog."

"Tell your mom you want to go see a nice man named Dr. Havner, okay? I'll give you his number."

I did pass that message on to my mother, who patted me on the head and responded, "Next time you see Miss Eleanor, tell her Woofie peed on her lunch."

Then she sent Woofie and I to play in the backyard.

Fast forward several years and a few *real* dogs later to my D&D game, where I'm asking New DM for the 19th time that week if Tabitha can have a familiar.

"Please?" I begged. "All the other wizards have familiars."

*"Tabitha can have a hundred familiars when she's grown up and no longer living in my campaign."*

"If all the other wizards had hot tub rash, would you want that too?" New DM would ask.

"If all the other wizards had hot tub rash, it's very likely she'd already have it," I would answer.

"Tabitha can have a hundred familiars when she's grown up and no longer living in my campaign."

Patience is not one of a tiefling's virtues, so

Tabitha did what any not-quite-normal wizard would do. She gave herself a familiar anyway.

Enter Oso de la Fez, an ex-burlesque show bear who was enslaved into a life of bicycle riding and balancing on rubber balls for the amusement of drunken spectators and wayward adventurers until Tabitha and her rogue friend, Teemu, busted him out. Yes, Tabitha has some question marks in her past, but she only did it to put herself through Charm School. Tabs promised Oso that when she left, he'd go with her.

Now she and Oso are tighter than a pair of studded leather pants.

Today they are both members of the Wylde Stallions adventuring group. While Oso has helped the Wylde Stallions with apprentice-level tasks, such as carrying heavy equipment looted from the party's kills, moving logs and boulders to create a safe and comfortable rest spot, and putting his height to good use by scouting out danger in and above the trees, he's not accepted by all members of the group. With the exception of Teemu, the rest have the nerve to *pretend* they can't see him! Who do they think Tabitha is talking to?

New DM lets Oso follow the group from one strife-ridden town to another, but when combat

ensues, he moves to the sidelines. I like to think of him as a high school mascot, riding his bicycle up and down the field, chanting words of inspiration: *Be aggressive! B-E aggressive!*

Afterward, he lumbers over to the group to make sure everyone is okay. Tabitha scratches his nose and assures him the Wylde Stallions will be right as rain

after a good long rest. Meanwhile, Aaeon, Maya, and Anwar roll their eyes and twirl their index fingers by their temples. Good thing Tabitha has ridicule resistance 15.

All of this was about to change.

"What's this?" I asked Marty, pointing to a book on his desk. "*Arcane Power*. Hmm..."

"That is the answer to your prayers," he answered. "Tabitha can finally have a familiar."

"She has one," I said. "Giant black bear, red fez. Kind of hard to miss."

"A *real* familiar," he corrected. "One we can all see."

"You could if you tried," I sighed. "You could if you tried..."

Marty may be closed-minded, but he gave me an idea. So, I went in search of New DM.

He wasn't surprised to see me standing at his desk with Marty's advance copy of *Arcane Power*.

"Which one did you choose?" he asked.

"Oso wants to be a real bear."

"Who do I look like? Geppetto?" he responded.

"Come on, New DM, he doesn't ask for much. Just a chance to prove himself to the group."

"Just swap out one of your feats for Arcane Familiar and pick a familiar. From *the book*. Or the *Dragon* article."

I knew he was going to say that, and I was ready to plead Oso's case. "All that time trapped in a steel cage, only let out once a day for a humiliating trot around a stage wearing a red fez. The only thing keeping him going was the dream of one day becoming a familiar."

New DM ignored me and pointed to the pages listing familiar choices. "You could have a cat. Or a cute, little dragonling! How about a book imp? You like books!"

I had no choice but to pull out the big guns:



*"His name is Oso  
He was a show bear  
Trapped in a cage covered in poop,  
He dreamed of adventure in a group!"*

New DM looked traumatized, so I stopped. Singing isn't my strong suit. Maybe songwriting isn't either.

"He still wears the red fez, you know," New DM pointed out. "No one is forcing him to dress like a bellhop."

With all the time I spend around puppies, you'd think I'd have mastered their beseeching look, but usually I look like a cross between a barn owl and Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. I give it a shot anyway.

New DM sighs, partially because this expression is almost as painful as my singing and partially because he knows this is his fault for asking us to create character back stories.

"I'll tell you what. If you can stat out Oso like a real familiar, he's all yours," he said. "Real stats. Not your fake ones like *Oso gives the party +35 to attacks or acknowledging Oso's presence grants an eternal shield*."

I should be thrilled. This is like Judy saying, *If you can find a dog that needs a home, you can have it*. Only I know this is New DM's creative way of saying no.

"How do I do that?" I asked.

He shrugs. "In the meantime, might I interest you in a falcon?"

I had a good mind to tell New DM where to put his falcon.

"Or how about a bound demon?" New DM called after me. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

I walked back to my desk with the weight of a thousand enslaved show bears pressing down on me. I let Oso down. Tabitha would kill me.

"Psst," I heard coming from the direction of a darkened conference room ironically named The

Shadowfell. "You looking for a familiar?"

"Uh . . . who's asking?" I said to the darkness.

"Come here," the voice said.

"Nu uh! I'm not going into The Shadowfell alone! Never split the party, dude!"

Fluorescent lights illuminated the conference room revealing . . . Rob Heinsoo.

"I heard you talking to New DM," he said. "Sad story about your bear. But I think I can help."

Interesting. New DM didn't say I couldn't ask for help.

"You can stat out my bear?" I asked. I mean, Rob's a nice guy and all, but I'm pretty sure making your coworkers imaginary friends real isn't part of his job description. "What's in it for you?"

"I'll think of something," he said, and that's good enough for me.

We settle into the conference room to discuss Oso's transformation.

"I bet this is how Snuffy felt the day the producers of *Sesame Street* determined the concept of imaginary friends wasn't healthy for kids."

Rob looked at me for a long moment. "I bet it's

*"I bet this is how Snuffy felt the day the producers of Sesame Street determined the concept of imaginary friends wasn't healthy for kids."*

exactly how he felt."

I gave Rob some history on Tabitha and Oso and the research I did on bears. Personally, I think R&D has overlooked an optimal familiar option. For instance, bears have a great sense of smell. That would come in handy when sniffing out an opponent who has concealment. Those giant paws are surprisingly nimble, and they're expert climbers. I'm

seeing a buff in Perception and Athletics.

"Did you know that some bears have been clocked running 35 mph?" I asked. "That could do wonders for a PC's speed."

"Of course I did!" Rob answered. Apparently his wife is a park ranger, so he knows all sorts of interesting facts about bears.

It goes without saying that Astrid had a rat named Aloysius who was handy when it came to stalking and spying and would probably have done more if Astrid weren't so scared of killing him.

"Familiars in 4th Edition don't die," Rob explains. "They can be targeted, but if they get hit they just go away and come back after an extended rest."

For someone who thinks the only thing that sucks about having a dog is that whole seven to one year ratio, that was about the greatest thing I've ever heard. Where can I get a 4th Edition shepherd lab mix?

"So it's like *Pet Cemetery*?" I asked. "Except they don't come back evil."

"Well," Rob said slowly, "they could."

"Oh no," I countered. "Oso doesn't have an evil

bone in his body."

"Look," Rob said, "part of your job as a player is to make things interesting. To add interesting elements to the story and move the plot forward."

"Actually, my job is to second guess New DM and silently judge my group's snack choices."

"How bad does Tabitha want her bear to be real?"

"Real bad."

"Like bad enough she'd give part of her soul for it?"

Seven-year old Shelly would have sold her bike, Hippity Hop, and her Buck Rogers Paint-By-Number kit, let alone her soul for a dog. But this was Tabitha, the careless, hostile, apathetic tiefling with a master-work chip on her shoulder.

"Probably," I said. She's multiclassed as a warlock, so making pacts with dubious types is all in a day's work. "Make that definitely."

"Good, good," he nodded. "But you know you can't just show up with a bear made of awesome and not expect consequences, right?"

I don't, but I nod and pretend I do.

"Tell me again why you're doing this for me?" I asked.

Rob smiled. "Oh you know, just helping out a friend in need. Besides, you never know when I might need a favor."

I think of Oso romping around the playmat, making small talk, taking up space. *An actual space!*

"I'm okay with consequences," I told Rob. "And paying back favors."

"Excellent," Rob said, laughing like a cartoon villain and rubbing his palms together.

For some reason that gave me the shivers. "You're just doing that to be funny, right? I mean, that's not your real laugh, is it?"

Rob laughed again.

I began to wonder if maybe New DM was right. I do like books. And a falcon could be bad ass. Maybe Oso wouldn't be happy in the real world. Or maybe Tabitha underestimated the commitment and attention that goes into caring for a real bear. I'm sure there are all sorts of fines associated with not cleaning up after your pet.

"You know," I told Rob, "You're probably really busy. You don't have to do this. I'm sure Tabitha will

understand. "No worries," Rob said, twirling his invisible mustache. "It will be fun." He laughed that villainous laugh again.

Yikes! What the heck is going on here? What had I gotten myself into? Oso de la Fez better be grateful, because I think I may have just done a bad thing.

As if reading my mind Rob added, "I think you'll both be pleased with Tabitha's new and improved companion."

This put my mind slightly more at ease. But what choice did I have? I had already given up a piece of Tabitha's soul. She might as well get something out of it.

And there in The Shadowfell we got to work, making Oso de la Fez a real bear.

#### About the Author

**Shelly Mazzanoble** still isn't sure what the going rate is to create an illegal familiar, but she'll be sure to let you know.



# BEAR WITH ME, PART 2

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE

illustrations by William O'Conner

*Oso de la Fez! Now that you're a real bear, what are you going to do first?*

*"I'm getting a Facebook page!"*

"I'm ignoring Oso's friend request," Sara told me. "We're not friends in real life, we're not friends on Facebook."

I should have asked her to clarify which of her lives she was calling real, but instead I scolded her blatant display of smug species-ism.

"Look at you, Miss Maxed Out. Someone thinks she can have too many friends," I said. Especially friends brought to you by shady soul-swapping.

"I ignored him too," Marty said. "I only accept real friends."

Weird, considering I'm Facebook friends with both of his cats.

It was only days before when Rob and I spent over an hour fleshing out Oso's past, present, and future. Turns out with his new history, Oso could easily land an ingénue job on a soap opera. And with his new

future, Rob and I should seriously consider writing for one.

"First, he needs to shrink," Rob said.

And I'll probably need to see one after this, but that's a different story.

"Sure, Oso won't mind shrinking. Small price to pay," I say, laughing. "Get it? *Small price?*"

Rob got it, but wasn't as amused. What can I say? I pun when I'm nervous, and I'm nervous about what I had signed on for.

"Now when he's in passive mode, Tabitha can keep him in her pocket or inside her robe," Rob explained.

"Actually Tabitha prefers to wear him like one of those teddy bear backpacks. It's much more practical this way than taking up valuable pocket space. And that way he can hold things for her. Cell phone, keys, plastic bags."

"Plastic bags?"

"Got to keep the Shadowfell beautiful!"

"He can't have a bike though," Rob said. "Too mechanical for D&D."

Hmm . . . animals really need to something to keep them engaged to prevent destructive behavior. Besides, Oso really loved his bike.



"How about a rubber ball?" I asked. "He really enjoys balancing on things. Like d20s."

Rob lit up like a sunrod in dungeoncrawl space. "We'll give him an orb to cruise around on when he's in active mode. He can fly around his targets and hover there like a dire mosquito."

This made for a cute visual, which Rob enhanced by humming a little ditty while doing an impression of Oso jogging on his orb.

"What's with the fez?" he asked. "Can he take it off?"

*"He's stored years of power in the fez," Rob added. "And when he gets in his opponent's face he does a little song and dance."*

"Good question. He never has," I said. "Maybe it's his security blanket. Or maybe it's like Bret Michaels's bandana and he's trying to hide the fact that he's balding."

"Perhaps it's what fuels his revenge," Rob said, writing something down. "He likes to have a visual reminder of where he's been and who made him suffer."

"And he'll keep wearing it until all show bears are freed!"

"He's stored years of power in the fez," Rob added.

"And when he gets in his opponent's face he does a little song and dance."

"So ironic considering his past!"

"And finishes with a tip of his hat."

"Like he's issuing a silent hello."

"Or panhandling."

"And you can't help but be charmed by this tiny, hovering ex-show bear's performance."

"So you dig around in your pockets for silver pieces."

"And when you look up—"

"You're dead!" I concluded triumphantly

"Yessssssssssss!"

"Well maybe not dead. But pretty bummed out."

I think I'm getting the hang of this R&D business.

One thing I know about bears is their attempt to move a predator to a more comfortable distance is

called a "bluff charge." I suggest we work that into his powers somehow.

"If that doesn't work, a mauling probably would."

"Good idea. Tabitha could get +2 on Intimidate checks thanks to Oso's constant benefit."

For an active benefit, we toss around the idea the ability to grant Tabitha the power of Oso's orb, but Rob thinks we can do one better.

"We'll give him speech as an active benefit and let him speak any language you know."

"Still pretty impressive for a bear."

"And he can issue a warlock's curse as a minor action."

"Oh! Tabitha always wanted to curse someone!" It's like she's always standing behind the paladin going,

"Yeah! What she said!"

"And . . . like all bears, Oso doesn't take well to being disturbed, so he deals immediate damage to any opponent who attacks him and misses."

I wonder if this includes verbal attacks. If so, Oso needs to learn about "sticks and stones," and Maya and Anwar need to learn how to bite their tongues.

Rob, deep in thought, tapped a pencil against his temple. And then he issued the following as a side note:

"Oh, and he's going to defect one day."

"Excuse me?"

"Remember what I said about consequences. Besides, you already agreed to the terms."

"Turning on the Wyld Stallyns wasn't part of the terms!" I shouted. Then again . . . "Was it?"

"I didn't say *who* he would turn on. Maybe he'll turn on the townspeople who threw peanuts at him when he performed. Maybe he's the mastermind behind a malicious plot. Or maybe he's programmed to turn on the people who love him. The important thing is you won't know when or how. Just that it's coming."

*That's the important thing?* Not that I may have just signed on to kill off my entire group because my wizard didn't want to pick a familiar out of the book? And okay, maybe one that was a little more powerful than the ones in the book. . . I'm okay with authentic surprises, but I hate anticipated surprises. Jack-in-the-boxes terrify me for that very reason, and I haven't played a game of hide-and-seek since I was six years old and my cousin sprayed Easy Off in my face when I discovered her in the laundry room. I was it! I was supposed to find her!

"Brilliant, isn't it?" Rob said.

"Did you know cocker spaniels are prone to a strange form of dementia that causes them to attack their masters?" I asked.

"No."

"And it can be slowed with medication. So maybe the same is true for Oso?"

Rob shakes his head. "No medication has been proven to help. And he'll be totally cognizant."

"Fine," I said. I could make this work. "Maybe he gets made fun of too many times by drunks and insular so-called friends and one day will wreck havoc on a local tavern. After everyone's gone home, of course. Tabitha will be so mad when she finds out she has to pay for the damages."

Rob smiled. "Cute, but you won't know what his trigger is. We'll leave that to your DM."

Oh woe! This is worse than I thought.

"I don't know about that. I'll have to get New DM's buy off." I said this hoping Rob might believe New DM runs our game with such a tight fist he'll never go for the chance to land a TPK at the hands of an ex-show bear familiar I forced on the group.

"Oh, I'm pretty sure he'll agree," Rob said.

Right. They know each other.

At the end of our hour, Oso's transformation was mostly complete, barring the finishing touches Rob promised to do on his own.

"Remember," Rob said, backing out of the Shadowfell, "One day his bluff charge won't be a bluff!"

"Wait!" I called after him. Last ditch effort time.

"How about we go the way of the Velveteen Rabbit and bring Oso to life by Tabitha's pure, unconditional love? That's way cooler than some dubious pact with malevolent spirits, right? Right?"

"Love? Ha!" he laughed, leaving me and my unconditional love alone in the Shadowfell. Was this some kind of eerie foreshadowing?

After 10 minutes of New DM's cackling, I picked up *Monster Manual 2* and threaten to beat him over the head with it.

As I feared, he had no qualms about using Oso and his Red Fez of Doom.

"So I get to not only determine what Oso's trigger is, but exactly what dastardly deed he's been plotting?" New DM asked. You could practically see his cold, steel heart beating through his shirt. "What a lovely gift."

## As I feared, he had no qualms about using Oso and his Red Fez of Doom.

"You don't have to use it for evil, you know?" I explained. "Maybe Oso has been developing an antidote to cure poison damage, or he's been working on a documentary exposing the harsh reality of enslaved animals traveling with burlesque shows."

"Or maybe he bites the hand that feeds him." This sends New DM into another long fit of giggles, and I really do throw the book at him. Good thing I fail my Athletics check.

"I can't believe I used to think you smelled good."

"Alright," he said trying to be serious. "Let's think about this. So Tabitha will show up one day with 30% less soul and a teddy bear backpack. Neither of which her party will probably notice."

"Well, yeah, but when Oso is in active mode everyone can see him," I added. "Now if Sara and Marty ignore him, they're just being rude."

"Why would dear, sweet Tabitha do this?" New DM asked.

Unfortunately I know the whole story. Here's the deal:

*Tabitha is not close to her parents. Her mother was a boring socialite and her dad made his fortune in fur trading. Always an animal lover, Tabitha fervently opposed her father's line of work. Tabby tried to rescue animals, sometimes right out of her father's slaughterhouse, and treat them as if they were beloved pets. But her efforts didn't*

*matter. Her father always found out and made her return them.*

*Refusing to take one dime of his blood money, Tabitha put herself through Aldwyns Academy for Wizardry by working at a sketchy—but lucrative—traveling burlesque show. There she met Oso, and she saw her one chance to make up for all those animals she wasn't able to save. She knew she would do anything within her power to give Oso the life he deserved. Until one day she learned the only thing that could save him was outside of her power.*

"Wow," New DM said. "That's got True Hollywood Story written all over it. I almost feel bad for her."

"Bad enough that you'll—"

“Oh, not *that* bad,” he said, nearly bursting into giggles again. “She made an unfortunate deal and someone has to pay for it.”

I know all about having to pay for bad deals. I got ripped off on eBay once trying to buy some Mookie Wilson baseball cards for my brother. The dealer sent me Carmen Fanzone instead and promptly canceled his email account and all traces of his existence on eBay.

*“You know that thing people always ask if bears do in the woods?” I asked. “They don’t. They do it in your rucksacks. Sorry about those trail rations.”*

We determine that Tabitha found this so-called bad deal by scouring the Shadowfell’s version of Craig’slist. She came across an open call posted by an exarch.

*Looking for a great investment opportunity? Look no further! We are actively seeking souls and partial souls in exchange for favors. Who doesn’t have a little soul to spare? You give us a slice of your inner being, and we grant you your deepest, darkest desire. All souls considered! Serious inquiries only. Warlocks strongly encouraged to apply.*

Big whoop, Tabby thought. Souls are for wussies. “Ahh...” New DM sighed. “Someone forgot to read the small print.”

“Who has time for that?”

New DM picks up an art order, which he pretended was the alleged small print: *Offer subject to retribution. For a limited time only, favor will no longer act of it’s own volition and will be controlled by an indomitable*

*force with a questionable agenda. No notice will be given when or where favor will be redeemed.*

“I’m calling the Attorney General,” I said, leaving New DM to his maniacal giggles.

“While you’re at it, call back that Nigerian prince who’s trying to get a hold of Tabitha. There’s a large sum of money involved. It’s extremely urgent!”

When game day rolled around, we finally got our chance to see what the real Oso was made of (when not plotting our imminent demise). Instead of placing my Oso mini on the sidelines next to Darrin (Tabitha’s stalker ex-boyfriend), the hunting cougar (Darrin’s new, somewhat older, girlfriend) and Astrid (who offers encouragement and innocuous commentary like one of those judges on “America’s Got Talent”) I picture him rushing the playmat like the Kool-Aid man bursting through a high school science classes.

“Oh yeah!”

“Smell something?” Marty asked, flapping his hand up and down over his nasal area.

“Like bad salmon,” Sara agreed. “Disgusting.”

“You know that thing people always ask if bears do in the woods?” I asked. “They don’t. They do it in your rucksacks. Sorry about those trail rations.”

The game picks up with us duking it out in Umbrforge Tower with a dark creeper who has a penchant

for disappearing, his wraith companion, and a couple of peppy shadar-kai with spiked chains who can skip through the room like a pair of rhythmic gymnasts.

Tabitha was already down 15 hit points from taking a beating last week. But she’s inspired by Oso’s eagerness to play.

“Oso de la Fez, activate! Form of . . . a tiny, yet intimidating, flying ex-show bear in a fez!”

“Oops,” Sara said. “Tabitha dropped her backpack.”

Oso’s *going to drop her*, I thought. But not yet. Instead he sails on up to the dark creeper.

“Tabby uses her minor action to place a curse on this chump,” I said. She also tosses out a *magic missile* so Oso wouldn’t think she was getting lazy now that he’s here.

“Can familiars flank?” Scott asked, moving Teemu closer to Oso and the dark hunter.

“Nope,” said New DM.

“Can Oso?” I asked.

“Still nope,” New DM repeated.

“I thought maybe Oso was impervious to that decree. You know, because of his sudden extreme awesomeness.” I looked at Sara when I said this.

“Can they die?” she asked, looking at me. “You know, because I stab them?”

By the time my turn came around again, half the group, including Tabitha, was engulfed in darkness thanks to the pesky dark creeper. She could move away easily enough but instead used her minor action to direct Oso to place the curse on one of the shadar-kai.

“You’re practically blinded,” Marty found necessary to remind me. “You could have moved one



square and gotten out of the darkness instead of letting your imaginary bear do your dirty work.”

“Oso has bigger plans,” I told him. “Tabby can handle a little nighttime.”

She casts *scorching burst* for good measure.

A few more rounds left all of us a little banged up. Tabby took an additional 18 points of damage. The shadar-kai apparently didn’t like Oso and Tabby’s tag team attack, and he fired back at Tabitha dealing a whopping 14 points.

“She’s down!” I shouted. “Negative 1!”

“At least she has something soft to land on when she gets knocked prone,” Marty commented, referencing Oso’s return to backpack mode. Just when he was having so much fun. You could practically hear him whine, “Oh Mom! Just 5 more minutes!”

Tabitha failed one death save before Anwar made his way over and dumped a healing potion down her gullet. Good thing she sleeps with her mouth open.

We eventually knocked off one of the shadar-kai and the dark creeper, but the last chainfighter proved to be stubborn. Even though it was bloodied, that didn’t stop it from going to town on Sara’s dragon-born, Maya.

“That’s 17 damage,” New DM told her.

“That hurts,” she said. Maya was well into the single digits.

Tabitha got up, dusted off her robes and sprung Oso into action to curse the mulish shadar-kai. *Shock sphere* . . . crit! Oso jumped up and down in excitement, which accidentally knocked his fellow party members prone.

“Oops, sorry guys. He’s tiny but he’s dense. Lots of muscle.”

The crit damage from the *shock sphere* wasn’t enough to kill the shadar-kai, but the additional damage from Oso’s curse was exactly enough.

“Not too shabby,” Scott said. “For his first time.”

“That’s right!” Oso shouted, thumping his chest in Maya’s face. “Can you see me now, Scaly Pants?”

Sara brushed him off. “Whatever. I so could have handled that, Oso.”

“Might be kind of hard from a prone position,” said Marty. “Welcome to the Wyld Stallyns, Oso.”

“As much as Oso would like to bask in your retribution,” I said, “he has some important business to tend to. See you punks later.”

**Oso de la Fez** is waiting for New DM to pull his trigger.

### About the Author

**Shelly** can’t stop making illegal familiars and fancies herself the Pied Piper of the Shadowfell—minus the whole drowning rats and kidnapping thing.

### Oso the Circus Bear

*Oso keeps the patter steady as he runs through the air on the orb he uses as a magic circus ball. If he decides he doesn’t like you, he rolls up to you, does a little song and dance and tips his fez. But beware! The fez is mightier than the sword! Ouch!*

Speed 4, fly 6 (hover)

#### Constant Benefits

**Grrrrrr:** You gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

#### Active Benefits

**His Own Bear:** Oso can speak any language you know, and can converse with other creatures. Unlike mere familiars, you can’t hear everything Oso hears and says unless Oso lets you, and you would never be able to tell Oso what to say.

**Pact Bear:** As a minor action when Oso is in active mode, you can place a curse on one target in a square adjacent to Oso. Until the end of the encounter, your attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage to that target, exactly as the warlock’s curse ability on page 131 of the *Players’ Handbook*. At 11th level, you deal an extra 2d6 damage to a cursed target, and at 21st level, you deal an extra 3d6 damage.

**Verrrry Dangerous:** Oso deals 1d10 damage to anyone who attacks him and misses. At 11th level, he deals 2d10 damage, and at 21st level, he deals 3d10 damage.



# CONTRITION OF A Full-Time Wizard

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE

illustrations by William O'Conner

It's time for this the Player-in-Chief to make a confession. Sometimes, I'm not the *best*-behaved D&D player. I know what you're thinking. I've read the message boards, I've even gotten your emails, and I certainly get my fair share of headshakes and *tsk tsk*s from around the office.

You could at least try to act surprised.

Yes, we have put New DM through the ringer, and no, he isn't getting paid extra for it, in case you want to start a fund. I like New DM. I do. He's not just a great Dungeon Master, but he's a good friend and he's taught us all a lot. He's been patient, but even Miss Uppity Gripeypants (yep, I've heard that one too—thanks, Mom!) can tell that's starting to wane. He laughs less and hits more. Is it really just lucky die rolling or are the D&D gods exacting his revenge? He recently told me that the group was on the verge of getting a talking-to. Okay, I guess that's really how I know he's fed up.

"With one exception," New DM said, "there is way too much complaining going on. You guys are taking this whole 'you're making rules up' gig too far. It's grating on my last nerve."

It's weird to think of New DM with a last nerve. He seems to have an endless supply of them.

"But isn't that what you guys do in R&D?" I asked. "Make up rules?"

"Not the ones you're complaining about," he said. "Too many monsters to fight! Wah! Really?"

"To be fair," I cautiously interjected, "there are sometimes a lot of monsters in one room. Maybe a tad overkill?"

"And you want to level faster, yet you played two sessions before realizing you were already 5th level."

"It was a very subtle transition between 4th and 5th level," I said.

New DM wasn't buying it. "You're like petulant children that barge into a room, break a bunch of things, and then cry because you got dirty."

Funny, I saw two kids do the same thing with a jar of organic spaghetti sauce at Trader Joe's the night before.

"We don't cry because we're dirty," I began. "We cry because we're getting pantsed by your multiple minions."

Oh, who am I fooling? He's right.

He's not our parole officer or congressman or math teacher or anyone else who deserves our ire and squabbling. He's just a guy who spends an awful lot of time every week preparing for a game he can play with us. New DM has a real job at Wizards. A job that keeps him busy. A job that could probably benefit from those 2 hours in a conference room that we suck out of him. I wasn't surprised he was getting fed up.

"I'm sorry, New DM," I said and I meant it. "I do complain too much."

"It's not just you," he said.

That surprised me. Sure, I sometimes complain about the rules (I'm still not over the whole, *I know three daily spells so I don't get why I can't use three daily spells* thing) but I always felt that was my function in the group. Some are fighters. Some are healers. Some are nit-pickers.

Allow me to remind you that this all goes down at work. Lucky, I know, to call this part of your job. You can't work in marketing without knowing what it is you're marketing, right? We can honestly say we eat, breath, and live D&D because for most of us, it doesn't end when we leave the office. Some are heading home to work on their campaigns; some are heading off to one of their four weekly games. Sometimes I'm convinced it's an absolute dream job. But sometimes I wonder if we're not on the verge of suffering The Great Hotdog Debacle of 1983.

Flashback... It's 1983. My dad hired my best friend Melina and I to man a hotdog stand he rented for a giant tent sale his business was having. We got paid \$2 an hour plus all the hotdogs we could eat. Not one to miss out on a perk, I ate about three hot dogs *an hour*. We were there for six hours. You do the math.

Needless to say, I didn't feel so good that night. Or for the next three days. And I didn't eat another hot dog again until The Great Spring Break Debacle of 1994, when my friends and I spent all of our cash on Fat Tuesday's margaritas and conch fritters by day three of our seven day vacation. (It was either eat a hot dog or the crazy beach guy's pet parrot, Hemingway.) Three days after that, I stopped eating meat all together.

We'd all have to make some serious changes to our behavior or New DM would treat us like a pack of day-old beef franks on a sun-roasted picnic bench.

But what to get the DM who has everything except a well-mannered, well-behaved group?

"Hey New DM," I asked, interrupting his real job. "Hypothetically speaking, if a gaming group wanted to do right by their DM, what kinds of things should they do?"

"Hypothetically speaking?" New DM asked, pulling out a notebook. "Let's take a look."

"You have a list?"

"A hypothetical list."

Scanning the list, I was relieved to see no names were called out. Still it's easy to recognize what you are guilty of. Some of this might not even be specific to our group, which made me wonder how many other groups are suffering their own growing pains.

In case your group is one of them, New DM may have some advice for you, too.

In my humble attempt at contrition, I present to you New DM's *Player Manifesto Wish List*. (As paraphrased by me. Which might account for why it sounds more like a doggie obedience class syllabus.)

## DO YOUR BUSINESS

Yeah, we leveled! Three weeks ago. So why haven't any of us taken the time to update our character sheets between games? It's like knowing you're getting a coveted gift for Christmas, only to wake up on the big day to declare you'd rather wait until New Year's to open it. We've all been guilty of this. Maybe *real* work got in the way. Or maybe we think we've got too many feats already. Regardless, it's not fair to your group.

The same deal goes with magic items. We'll drag around an undisclosed level 9 magic item for weeks before handing it over to someone. And forget about shopping. Even I don't take time out to stock up on supplies. We'll be starving in the forest six feet outside of town before anyone realizes we haven't eaten in weeks. New DM has called us out more than a few times for claiming to dump a *healing potion* down the throat of a near-dead party member.

"Where did you get a *healing potion*?" he'd ask.

"We looted it off the guards we killed in the tower."

"Anwar used that on Maya three encounters ago."

"Oh."

How does he know this stuff? He's not even a mother.

## LISTEN!

So apparently dungeon masters don't talk just to hear themselves. At least New DM doesn't. When he prattles on about things like who we're looking for, where we are, and who we're up against, it might be important.

Adam used to write these things down, but when he left the group we were forced to rely on our



memories or Scott, which is worse because he gets sidetracked in the middle of a sentence and starts writing down all the recipes he can add whiskey to.

"Just once," New DM pleaded, "I'd love for you guys to remember where you are and what you're fighting for."

"Sounds like you want us to channel our inner 80's John Hughes movie character."

"I want you to channel your inner grownups and quit acting like a bunch of teenagers stuck in detention."

Same thing, right? But hey, who am I to argue?

"But then you wouldn't get to do your 'previously on DUNGEONS & DRAGONS' spiel," I say instead.

"Get to?"

Interesting...

## DROP IT!

I once dated a guy who was a research tech at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. He'd often leave work grumpy and stressed which usually prompted a response from me somewhere along the lines of, "Buck up, camper! It's not like you're curing cancer!" We didn't last long and not just because he couldn't appreciate my highbrow sense of humor.

Here at Wizards, we make games. Games are supposed to be fun, right? Therefore, one might assume Wizards is a fun place to work as proven by the fact you can play games on the clock. Your assumption is correct, but it can also backfire on you. Do you know how hard it is to leave work when you're still at work? Maybe you just ended a frustrating conference call seconds before your game. Or maybe your coworker blew a deadline that's going to prevent you from get-

ting a big project done on time. And maybe that same coworker is sitting across the table from you in need of some healing.

Not everyone respects our game time, and meetings are often scheduled over the top of our game time. And often, a co-worker won't bother with a meeting and just barge into the conference room waving a sell sheet that needs editing or a press release that needs approving. You can't exactly say, "Hey back off! I'm playing a game here!" Especially when it's your boss waving the press release.

Regardless of what goes on during your day, you need to check that work baggage outside the conference room door and stay in the game, which brings me to the next point.

## STAY!

Do people in your game read the newspaper, call their mothers, or take off to run a few errands between turns? Probably not. At least, I hope not. Paying attention shouldn't be limited to remembering what happened the last time you played. It's also about remembering what you're doing in the moment. Don't bring your laptop, spreadsheet, or Power Point presentation into the game. Cell phones should only be allowed if you're expecting an important call. Even if it's not your turn, you should still be paying attention to what's happening at the table. Imagine this is real life, and you and your buddies are in the middle of a bar fight. Are you going to throw a punch and then jump into a game of darts until someone taps you on the shoulder and tells you the bad guys are waiting in the parking lot if you maybe want to hit them over the head with a pool cue?

## RESPECT THE PACK

Hey, buddy. You come here often? No? Why's that? Oh, right! Because you're new! You haven't been here at all!

Like the members of a real adventuring party, you can't forget who has your back. Whether you've made it official or not, you have entered into a social contract. That means you show up. *On time*. You arm your character with the best knowledge, weapons, skills, and spells they can afford. You watch out for one another. You share your snacks. (Or at least make a half-hearted offering.)

It's a big deal when you're trying to fill an opening in a game group. It's not just about who's willing to play a healer (which we never seem to have enough of) or who is free Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5:30. The group needs to mesh. They have to trust each other. Your social feng shui depends on it.

If you're the new person entering the group you've got to respect the dynamics. Why not wait a few sessions before you rush to usurp the alpha? Maybe you have been playing longer than everyone else. Maybe you are the most knowledgeable. But not everyone takes kindly to be told right away where to stand, what spell to cast, what monster to target, or how many calories that bag of steakhouse onion potato chips is packing. Boy, people really hate that.

## PROTECT!

This goes along with the above, only according to New DM, the burden often falls on the Dungeon Master. While most of us are playing with people we'd want to protect in real life, it's sometimes jarring to see real-life tensions flare up in a fantasy

setting. Our game is no exception. Like I said, we *work* together. These things are bound to happen when you spend a quarter of your week within three feet of each other.

I think we've all noticed a grudge match playing out on the playmat. Maybe the paladin chose to double move rather than lay her hands on the near-prone bard. Maybe an hour before the game the paladin and the bard were having a heated discussion over which monsters from *Monster Manual 2* were going to be previewed. Coincidence?

Our characters are innocent bystanders and it's not fair to the other players in your game to exact your fantasy revenge on one another. That's what kickboxing class is for.

## PRAISE!

This is my addition to the manifesto, as New DM wouldn't dream of asking this of us. Is it really the job of Dungeon Masters to make sure the players are having fun? The ones around the building say so. Seems like a big job to pin on one person, yet one they take on willingly.

This probably goes without saying, but it's something my group often forgets. The Dungeon Master isn't trying to piss you off. New DM is (mostly) playing by rules. I mean, the guy *knows* the rules. He's been playing D&D for nearly three decades. And yet we find it necessary to question him 80% of the time. Okay, 90%.

Maybe a power struggle is normal between players and DMs, but in our case it's less like a struggle and more like ganging up, holding down, and issuing a massive wedgie. Is it because we're playing approxi-

mately 12 feet from the people who make the rules that gives us this false sense of "phone a friend?"

"Since when can't dragonborns teleport?" we'll ask.

"Since forever," New DM will answer.

"We'd like to get a second opinion, please."

And sometimes we would too. I know...annoying.

Contrary to what we accuse New DM of, he tries to be fair. If he's not sure about a rule, he looks it up. And if he was wrong, he admits it.

While we're all sure to thank him after the game, I'm not sure we tell him often enough that we appreciate the work he puts into our campaign. That we think it's nice he schedules his meetings and presentations and calls to his mother *around* our game. That we're grateful he hasn't ditched our ungrateful butts in favor of any number of other groups in search of a DM around the office. Uh oh. Maybe he didn't know they existed. Should I not have mentioned that?

So here's to you, New DM. And DM's everywhere. As Player-in-Chief, I herby declare the month of July Dungeon Master Appreciation Month. Maybe I will bring him flowers or bake him a cake. Or maybe I should take Tabitha shopping, level her up, and learn how to use that level 9 magic item she just secured. Seems like that's something he'd appreciate even more.

### About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble is also sorry for smashing her fist through her cousin's Minnie Mouse birthday cake, accusing Stacy Kendrick of stealing Papa Smurf and subsequently punching her in the jaw for retribution, and that other Spring Break 1994 debacle.

## OSO, FOR THE BALANCED CAMPAIGN

Last month, we presented a . . . well . . . less-than-balanced version of Oso the Circus Bear, setting off a firestorm of controversy on the Wizards of the Coast message boards. The Oso Tabitha uses in her campaign is the powerful (but potentially treacherous) version, but he comes with a cost determined by Shelly's DM. The version below, also designed by 4th Edition lead designer Rob Heinsoo, is more suitable for campaigns in which a DM doesn't want to be troubled with a potentially disruptive, vengeful familiar. If you think your DM would be amenable to the original Oso—and the cost that comes with such a powerful familiar—just be sure to run it by him or her first!

### Oso de la Fez, Former Show Bear

*Balanced atop his ball, wearing his small, red fez, this bear seems the picture of innocence—until he bellows with fury and lashes at enemies who mock him with his razor-sharp claws.*

Speed 4, fly 4 (hover)

Constant Benefits

Grrrrrr: You gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Active Benefits

**His Own Bear:** Oso can speak any language you know, and can converse with other creatures. Unlike mere familiars, you can't hear everything Oso hears and says unless Oso lets you, and you would never be able to tell Oso what to say.

**Verrrry Dangerous:** Oso deals 1d4 damage per tier to anyone who attacks him and misses.



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Dean M...



# A cast of strange familiars

M-U's best friend comes in many shapes and sizes

by Stephen Inniss

Experienced gamers usually regard additions to a game's rules with suspicion — and rightly so. Such additions often make play more complicated and time-consuming, instead of improving the experience or making it more enjoyable. Those who have tinkered with the AD&D™ combat system can attest to this problem: Vexing new details start to bog down the game. At best, players wonder what happened to the adventure. At worst, they forget what the adventure was. But fortunately for meddlers, there are *some* parts of the AD&D game system that can be improved with a relatively small investment of time.

One such part is the first level magic-user spell *find familiar*. The results of this spell can be very important, and once determined, they are frequently referred to. Because *find familiar* is usually cast very infrequently (sometimes only once per magic-user), a more detailed version can offer a real improvement without detracting from the adventure. Expansion and modification of this spell has merit in its own right, and — as is often the case in complex constructions like the AD&D game — the new information can enhance other parts of the game, too.

Like most fantasy role-playing material, the *find familiar* spell has its roots outside of the game system. Familiars played an important role in the wizardry of folklore, serving as sorcerer's helpers, or advising people with strange talents. Though some familiars were invisible, most were, or took the shape of, small animals. In Europe, particularly in England, belief in familiars was common. The familiar was attributed to witches, thereby earning an evil reputation. Elsewhere, the view of familiars was less negative. Siberian shamans, for example, were said to employ familiars as guards and guides to the spirit world.

Not only folklore has influenced the game; familiars are popular in fantasy literature as well. In recent works, one need only think of the mage Ged's otak (little monkeylike creature) in Ursula K. LeGuin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*, or the unpleasant companion in Fritz Leiber's short story "Ill Met in Lankhmar."

But if folklore and fantasy literature inspired the *find familiar* spell, then they didn't provide *enough* inspiration. Rules for the spell are incomplete and unbalanced. They are incomplete in that the possibilities for normal animal familiars are restricted to a few European creatures without even encompassing the folk beliefs of that continent. It seems to be assumed that a familiar

will be summoned near human habitation (where else are black cats found?) and in a temperate climate with Old World fauna. But what if a magic-user summons a familiar in a tropical rain forest, on a small island, or in the arctic? The unimaginative response would be to restrict or eliminate the chance of success. But this seems dull when there might be so many other possibilities. A number of real-world animals would make good familiars in an AD&D setting, and many of these beasts were once actually believed to serve as familiars.

The menagerie described below expands and modifies the group of official AD&D familiars. You may want to make further changes for your campaign, but before you use or alter this material, you should understand how the animals below were chosen. Subjects taken into account include: armor class and hit points, size and combat prowess, adaptability, appearance and reputation, and commonness.

Creatures that deviate sharply from the standard familiar's armor class of 7 and the standard hit point range of 2-4 (the statistics given with the spell) have been eliminated from the selection below. Some flexibility regarding these statistics is necessary, however. As the spell stands, a lowly toad familiar becomes harder to hit than many humans, and just as powerful as a hawk familiar. We can "justify" this increase in power by assuming the toad gained more ability when it became a familiar. A change for the better is acceptable. A change for the worse, however, seems unlikely. No animal should become weaker as a familiar than it was as a normal animal. The cat, for instance, now has statistics in *Monster Manual II* which give it a better armor class than 7. Since it is unlikely that only crippled, deficient felines respond to the *find familiar* spell, the cat — and other animals like it — does not take a cut in AC when it becomes a familiar. An effort has been made, however, to not stretch the original spell beyond reason, so nothing smaller than a toad or more powerful than a cat has been allowed. After all, *find familiar* is only a first level spell.

Restricting armor class ratings becomes easier when one accepts that familiars are by nature small animals. In the AD&D game, familiars should be no bigger or heavier than a very large cat (16 pounds maximum). There are a number of good reasons for this. Most, if not all, traditional familiars are small, and so are all of the official familiars. Small size is useful to a creature that serves as a guard, scout, and

spy (as described in the *Players Handbook*). Small animals are more easily concealed in dangerous situations, and they're easier to carry if incapacitated; this becomes increasingly important as their masters rise in level, meeting greater hazards.

Small size may disappoint the sorcerer in search of brawn, but familiars aren't meant to be bodyguards. None of the normal familiars should be more lethal in combat than, say, a hawk. Certainly, venomous animals are inadmissible. The already great range in offensive capability within the group should not be increased. In any case, a physically powerful companion that serves as a magic-user's bodyguard would be redundant. Fighters are already a well established part of the game.

Though they needn't be combat-hardy, familiars should be otherwise adaptable and robust. Without excessive protection and preparation, familiars should be able to go wherever adventurers go: through arctic snowfields, on board ships, across tropic deserts, and into deep, dark caverns. They should be able to survive on simple, prepared rations, or be able to forage for themselves in most places. In general, their requirements should be rather similar to those of humans. The familiar's existence shouldn't be dependent on maintaining wet skin, for instance, or on anything else equally unreasonable.

Perhaps the most important consideration in choosing a new familiar is its appearance and reputation. A creature that sometimes serves as a companion of wizards in fable or fantasy is usually fit for that role in the AD&D game. Failing a reputation as a familiar, the animal should look like it might be found in the company of magic-users. It should be arcane, unusual, and mysterious, or have a bad or uncertain reputation (deserved or not), just as magic does. Nocturnal or darkly colored animals are ideal.

Lastly, animals that are very rare or not well known are not included. Besides requiring excess explanation, many rare animals resemble more common species, so they would simply lengthen an already extensive catalog. Any name given here appears in an ordinary dictionary.

The table on the next page can be used for random determination of familiars — just roll 2d20 when the spell is cast successfully. (The official spell has a 25% failure rate, expressed as "no familiar in range," so check for this failure first.) If a familiar inappropriate to the locale is rolled, check the creature descriptions that follow to see

if another version of the animal would be present. Otherwise, just roll repeatedly until something appropriate is summoned. Each table entry includes the following information: The required dice roll or range of numbers to summon that creature; the name of the creature; its movement rate and damage/attack figures; its special sensory powers; and its armor class, if that figure deviates from the standard AC of 7.

### Movement and damage

The movement rates and damage values in the table were developed with an eye toward conformity with the AD&D system rather than with the real world. Reducing an animal's movement rate to a single number inevitably involves judgment, since sprints and endurance are not taken into account. Determining damage per attack is likewise subjective, so the given values need a word of explanation.

The amount of damage done by a small animal's attack creates a problem. On one hand, even the smallest teeth or claws should undeniably cause some damage, and the AD&D world is one in which halflings can cut down storm giants. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine an animal as small as a weasel seriously harming a human. The combat system is scaled to human sizes, so that one point of damage is considerable. Many ordinary humans have only one hit point between themselves and death. There are a number of ways in which the damage done by small animals could be realistically quantified in the AD&D game; unfortunately, they all involve an increase in complexity that defeats the purpose of a system designed more for ease of play than realism. Critical hits, fractions of hit points, damage varying with the size of the opponent — all of these are unacceptable, so when damage occurs, the minimum amount is one hit point.

Giving a small animal the ability to inflict even one hit point of damage can lead to all sorts of absurdities. In TSR's module S4, *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, ordinary bats can bite for a single point of damage. Since most bats weigh less than a pound, and their teeth measure a fraction of an inch, these "super-bats" hardly approximate reality. If such ordinary (but dangerous) creatures commonly exist in the AD&D world, one can't help wondering how an ordinary peasant survives. Statistics in the table above make familiars a good deal more dangerous than their real-world equivalents. This can be explained by the familiars' abnormal intelligence, and their ability to attack with greater ferocity and cunning than ordinary animals of their type. Less exceptional animals should not inflict this much damage; for ordinary animals, scale the damage down by 1 point. Otherwise, clerics or druids who can conjure or summon animals will be too powerful. I recommend the unmodified values, however, for animals that are extraordinary — the results of a *reincarnate* spell, for instance, or of a druid's shape-changing

## Thirty-four familiars to find

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 Bat, large: 1"/18"; 1 pt.; superior hearing and night vision; 50% have echolocation.                                      | 21 Kinkajou: 6"; 1-2/1-2; superior night vision, good hearing and olfactory.        |
| 3 Bat, small: 1"/24"; 1 pt.; superior hearing, good night vision, echolocation. AC 4 in prime flying conditions (see text). | 22 Lizard, large: 6"; 1 pt.; wide-angle vision.                                     |
| 4-5 Cat, domestic: 12"; 1-2 / 1 (rear claws 1-2); superior night vision, good hearing and olfactory senses. AC 6.           | 23 Lizard, small: 3"; nil; wide-angle vision.                                       |
| 6-7 Cat, wild: 18"; 1-2 / 1-2 / 1-2 (rear claws 1-2 / 1-2); same as domestic cat. AC 5.                                     | 24 Monkey, large: 12"; 1 pt.; sharp color vision.                                   |
| 8 Civet: 12"; 1-2; same as domestic cat. AC 6.  | 25 Monkey, small: 9"; 1 pt.; sharp color vision.                                    |
| 9 Coati: 12"; 1-2; superior olfactory senses, good hearing and night vision. AC 6.  | 26 Otter: 6 "1"/8"; 1-2; superior underwater and night vision, good olfactory.      |
| 10 Cock: 6"/15"; nil; wide angle vision.  | 27 Owl, large: 1"/18"; 1-2 / 1-2; superior hearing and night vision.                |
| 11-12 Crow: 1"/36"; 1 pt.; sharp, wide-angle color vision.  | 28 Owl, medium: 1"/18"; 1/1; superior hearing and night vision.                     |
| 13 Dog: 15"; 1-3; good night vision, olfactory, and hearing.  | 29 Owl, small: 1"/18"; nil; superior hearing and night vision.                      |
| 14 Fisher: 9"; 1-2; superior olfactory, good hearing & night vision. AC 6.  | 30 Parrot: 1"/18"; nil; wide-angle color vision.                                    |
| 15 Fox: 18"; 1-2; superior olfactory & hearing, good night vision. AC 5.  | 31 Raccoon: 9"; 1-2; good night vision, hearing, and olfactory.                     |
| 16 Gull: 6"/24"/12"; 1 pt.; sharp, wide-angle color vision.   | 32 Rat: 15"; 1 pt.; superior olfactory, good wide-angle night vision, good hearing. |
| 17 Hare: 21"; nil; good wide-angle night vision, good hearing and olfactory.  | 33 Raven: 1"/27"; 1-2; sharp wide-angle color vision. AC 6.                         |
| 18 Hawk, large: 1"/33"; 1-2 / 1-2 / 1; very sharp vision. AC 6.   | 34 Skunk: 12"; 1 pt.; good night vision, hearing, & olfactory.                      |
| 19 Hawk, medium: 1"/35"; / 1 / 1; very sharp vision. AC 5.  | 35 Snake: 9"; 1 pt.; wide-angle vision, good hearing.                               |
| 20 Hawk, small: 1"/36 / 1 / 1 / 1; very sharp vision. AC 5.   | 36 Squirrel: 12"; 1 pt.; sharp wide-angle vision, good hearing.                     |
|   | 37 Toad: 3"; nil; good wide-angle night vision.                                     |
|   | 38 Weasel: 15"; 1 pt.; superior olfactory, good hearing and night vision. AC 6.     |
|   | 39-40 Special, as per spell description.  |

By necessity, a large gap in attack power exists between those animals that inflict a point of damage and those unable to do even that (with damage figures of "nil"). The gap can be narrowed if the DM considers that an attack might not be entirely without effect in game terms, even if it does no "damage." With their abnormal intelligence, familiars could probably choose tender spots for their attacks, like noses, fingertips, and eyes. Such a hit would certainly disrupt spell casting and even hinder fighters (-1 to hit) unless they take some action to remove the annoyance. Those who try to ignore a small animal's attack risk being tripped up, blinded, or thrown off balance. An opponent will find it difficult to concentrate even on physical activity with a rabbit hanging onto his thumb by its teeth, or an owl flapping in his face. However,

animals that cause no "damage" cannot slay even a helpless opponent unless ample time is available. A hawk might kill a sleeping orc, but a hare couldn't do significant damage before its victim awoke.

### Sensory abilities

These powers are not quantified in the AD&D rules, but for the sake of comparison some attempt is made to do so here, since the magic-user receives sensory information from his or her familiar. These notes should also be useful if a druid chooses to shape-change into one of these forms to pick up extra information.

Hearing is described as either good (significantly better than human) or superior (the kind of hearing that locates the slightest sound at 50 paces). The ratings are a generalization, taking into account sensitivity,

audible frequency range, and ability to locate direction. Animals with good hearing have a 10 to 20 percent better chance of locating invisible or hidden creatures (based on hearing alone, when it applies) than creatures with normal hearing — depending, of course, on conditions. Those with superior hearing will be about twice as good.

Animals with olfactory (smelling) abilities

*A bat's echolocation is directional, so it is possible to sneak up behind a bat.*



above the human norm should have the same improved chances of noting hidden enemies as those with good hearing, depending on circumstances and on how good they are at identifying scents. In addition, those with a good sense of smell can track about half as well as a ranger. Those with superior capability can track equally as well as a ranger. The conditions under which tracking is possible, and any information gained by tracking, will of course differ for familiars and rangers, according to their physical and mental capabilities.

Visual ability involves several different aspects. All animals generally have wider fields of vision than humans, but where this is especially so it has been noted. Such animals should be harder to sneak up on, negating surprise in some situations. Color vision is present only in diurnal animals, and as a general rule, diurnal animals that are active only in dim light do not see color well, if at all. Animals that see well in poor light also tend to have poor acuity, since sharpness of vision and sensitivity to light are opposed to one another. This means that animals with sharp vision will have poorer-than-human night sight. In addition, animals with night vision will not see as clearly as a human in good light. Those animals with night vision can see either one (good) or two (superior) classes better than human on the following scale: daylight, twilight, full moon, half moon, starlight, and cloudy with no moon. By this rough measure, an owl (superior) sees as clearly under a full moon as a human does by day. Remember that there must be at least some light for night vision to be effective.

If any of an animal's sensory capabilities are not mentioned in the table, it is safe to assume that the creature in question has a performance poorer or no better a human's in that area.

### Familiar descriptions

Many of the animals named in the table represent a broad group. Even if you have knowledge of the animal that's listed, you should check the description to see what other animals may be included.

**BAT:** Bats that are summoned as familiars come in two sizes, according to mode of life. The smaller bats have bodies ranging from mouse-sized to rat-sized, though they look bigger with their wings fully spread. They are found in any climate that is temperate or warmer. The larger type of bat is found in the tropics, has a wingspan of about five feet, and may weigh up to two pounds.

Bats are usually some shade of brown, though they may be black or have a red or yellow tinge to their fur. Five percent of those summoned to be familiars are albinos as the spell preferentially selects them.

Most bats are able to navigate by sound — an ability known as echolocation. They produce high-pitched squeaks (or sometimes clicks) that are reflected from their surroundings, creating a fairly detailed and accurate picture of the world about them. In game terms, this ability functions in a 60' radius. Although it's not entirely logical, echolocation should not give bats an extra chance of recognizing visual illusions for what they are. The AD&D game does not allow creatures with infravision a bonus for noticing whether an illusion radiates heat, so it must be assumed that an animal with echolocation likewise receives no

(and do not get the benefit of AC 4, as specified in the table), because their wings are lightly furred at best, and they lose heat rapidly.

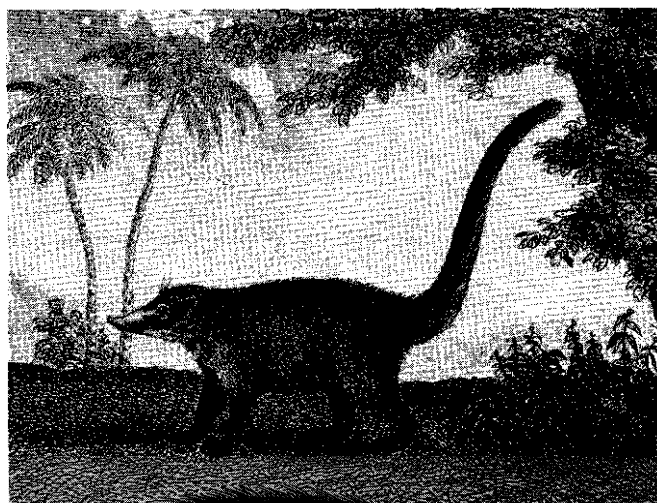
The larger tropical bats are clumsier and slower in flight (class B) compared to their smaller brothers. Only 50% of those that respond as familiars will have echolocation. If this ability is present, it sometimes involves tongue-clicking sounds, rather than squeaks. Tropical bats eat fruit and nuts. Like their smaller brethren, they can be sinfully ugly.

**CAT:** This category embraces both domestic cats and their wild cousins, ranging in size from 5 to 16 pounds. In cities and towns any cat summoned will be domestic, or at least once-domestic, as will 75% of the cats found in inhabited areas. All others summoned as familiars will be small, wild cats. Cats are found in any environment with the exception of arctic and subarctic uninhabited areas.

Wild cats are spotted or striped, or of a solid color with markings on ears and tail. They will resemble tigers, leopards, and lynxes in coloring. Cats of domestic origin will always be black, or at the option of the DM will have some unusual symbol in the pattern of their fur.

Domestic cats can only make one claw rake with their forepaws per attack, but wild cats can take a second swipe. Both gain rear claw strikes if a forepaw attack succeeds in hitting the opponent. All cats surprise their prey 4 in 6 times. They are surprised only 1 in 6 times.

Cats will eat meat of any sort, preferably fresh. Wild ones will sometimes bring down prey as large as a lamb.



*Coatis are related to raccoons. With their sensitive and flexible snouts, they can detect and root out a wide variety of foods.*

bonus. In addition, note that a bat's echolocation is directional, so it is possible to sneak up behind a bat.

Small bats are swift and agile in flight (maneuverability class A). For game purposes, all have echolocation. They will eat insects, or sometimes small frogs or fish or even smaller bats. They can be fed lean meat, preferably fresh. In cold climates small bats cannot fly very well or very far

**CIVET:** The animals in this category are tropical and subtropical carnivores that look somewhat like a cross between a cat and a weasel, with the cat predominant. They are about cat-sized, and colored much as wild cats are: with spots and stripes, or vague cloudy markings. The category includes genets, which differ from civets in that they lack scent glands and are sometimes tamed and used as mousers. In general, civets are



Fishers can swim well, and those living in areas with trees are good climbers.



quite wild and shy and will not be common near human habitations. When this result is rolled for a familiar, a genet will be summoned 100% of the time in a town or city, 50% of the time in other inhabited areas, and 10% of the time in any other area. Otherwise, the resultant familiar will be a civet.

All of these animals can climb well, though their claws are not as sharp and fully retractile as a cat's. They are less carnivorous than cats, but thrive on meat. Once a week civets (not including genets) can exude a foul musk that has the same effect on those nearby as a troglodyte's odor (see the Monster Manual).

COATI: These animals are related to raccoons, and are somewhat similar to them in appearance and behavior, though they have long, snoutlike noses and long, slender tails. They usually hold their tails straight up, perpendicular to their bodies. Coatis are native to most kinds of terrain in tropical and subtropical climates. Adults weigh as much as large cats. Coatis are more terrestrial than raccoons, and though they can manage greater bursts of speed than raccoons, they are not as good at handling objects or climbing. With their sensitive and flexible snouts, they can detect and root out a wide variety of foods.

COCK: This term identifies a male bird of the group of pheasants and pheasant-like birds that includes the common chicken. These birds are found in any temperate to tropical area that offers cover. Those summoned to be familiars will be about the size of an ordinary pheasant, and jet black. If domestic birds are summoned, they will represent one of the smaller, more agile breeds, such as the bantam. Always in towns and cities, and 50% of the time in other inhabited areas, the summoned cock familiar will be domestic.

All of these birds are class C fliers and haven't much endurance (four rounds of flight at most). They are omnivores, but greens and grains make up the bulk of their diet.

CROW: This category covers most of the medium-sized birds of the genus *Corvus*, including common crows, fish crows, carrion crows, rooks, and so on — but not ravens. Crows are found in any climate from subarctic to tropical, in all but the most barren of wastelands. They do not fear human habitations. They measure about 1½ feet from beak to tip of tailfeathers. Crows are black, sometimes with white markings. They are good mimics, and as familiars they can convey messages of three words or less, though they can in no way speak coherently or understand language

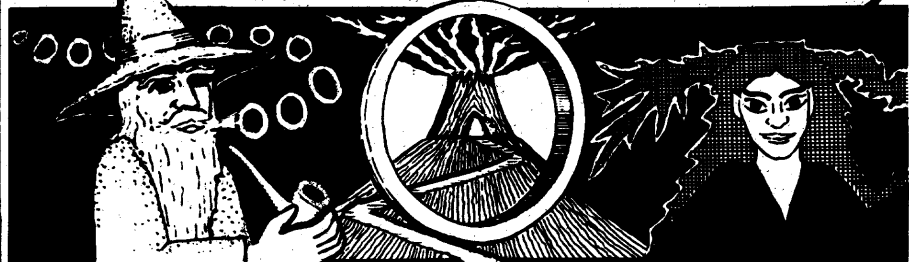
without magical aid. Crows do well on a varied diet much like that of humans, though they enjoy insects a good deal more. They are class A fliers. During daylight conditions, they are never surprised. If a crow's hit succeeds, it may (10% chance) blind the opponent's eye.

DOG: In inhabited areas, the summoned dog is one of the smaller sorts — a skinny mongrel with wary eyes, the "thievish" dog of early classifications that by its appearance supports the theory that domestic dogs carry a strain of jackal. In tropical and subtropical areas away from human habitation, the animal summoned will be a true wild dog of appropriate size. Dogs will not be found outside tropical and subtropical areas unless human dwellings are nearby.

Dogs of domestic origin will be black, pied, or brown with a yellow or reddish tint. Wild dogs will be brindled or plain in pattern. Those summoned to be familiars will be the size of a large fox or small jackal, but with more powerful jaws. In packs they can bring down deer, but these dogs take small game as a general rule. Wild or domestic, dogs will eat nearly anything, though they prefer ripe meat.

FISHER: This category encompasses all of the larger weasel-like animals, including the fisher, plus the larger martens and the mongooses. All are similar in habits and appearance, though they aren't close

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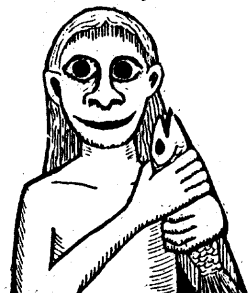
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relatives. The fisher family described here inhabits all climates but the arctic, preferring to avoid dense settlements. Mongooses are predominantly found in tropical and subtropical areas, while the others inhabit cooler climates.

All of these animals tip the scale at 2-16 pounds. They measure 2-4 feet in length. The animals can swim well, and those living in areas with trees are good climbers. All are exclusively carnivorous, unlike most animals called "carnivores." Some mongooses are exclusively diurnal, but these will not respond to the *find familiar* spell.

**FOX:** When a fox becomes a familiar, in temperate climates it is usually of the common red fox variety. Still, foxes can be found everywhere, even in the high arctic. Color of coat and shape of ears and face may vary, but all foxes weigh between 4 and 15 pounds, although their long fur and tails sometimes give them a heftier appearance.

Foxes are swift and canny in the hunt, whether the pursuer or the pursued. They have been known to outrun wolves, and few other carnivores can match their endurance. A surprisingly good climbing ability complements their speed. Foxes eat meat and insects primarily, but they will accept some vegetable matter. Like dogs, they seem to prefer a well-rotted meal.

**GULL:** Birds of this sort that respond to the *find familiar* spell are not the ordinary

beachgoers; they're black. In arctic waters, the summoned bird will be the dark, gull-like skua. Gull familiars always represent the larger birds in their family; small gulls, like those resembling terns, will not be summoned. Gull familiars have wingspans of 4 to 5½ feet, and measure 1½ to 2 feet from beak to tail. Birds matching this description exist worldwide, inhabiting areas within 50 miles of any coastline and near any large inland body of water.

Although these familiars are skilled at flying long distances over water, they are not particularly agile (class C fliers). Gulls can swim, but only on the water's surface. They eat anything from worms and turnips to carrion and snails, but their favorite entree is fish.

**HARE:** The hare, with its reputation for sly tricks, is not uncommonly thought to have magical properties. Those summoned by a magic-user are black in color, and abnormally large.

Hares are lankier and leggier than rabbits. They can muster impressive speed over short distances, and perform prodigious leaps (up to 20') at need. The animals have no effective means of attack. They can survive on nearly any sort of vegetable matter, including the juicy parts of bark and twigs. They inhabit the lands from the arctic to the tropics, but they do not live in heavy forests. Their ears are abnormally large, not for collecting sound, but for

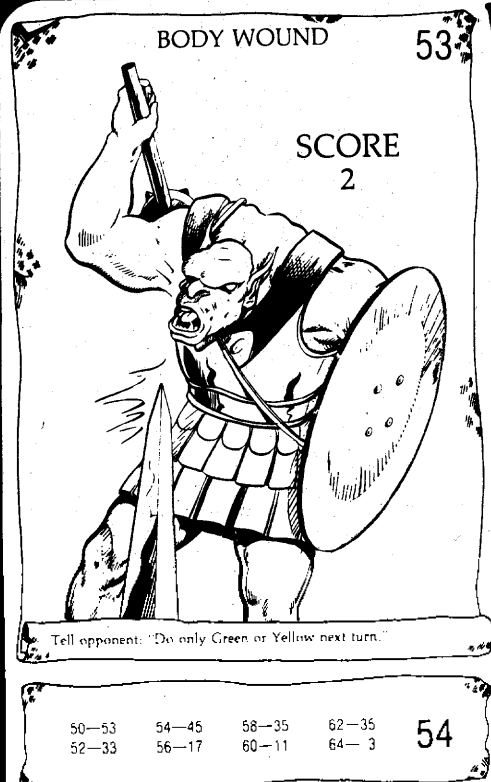
radiating body heat — a necessary function, because the animals do not sweat or pant.

**HAWK:** The hawk family, as used here, covers the daytime raptors, from large soaring hawks to comparatively puny sparrowhawks. For game purposes, the birds are classified in three groups according to size. The first class, covering the largest birds, includes the soaring hawks known as buteos or buzzards, plus the largest falcons. The second class, for midsized birds, covers falcons such as the peregrine, plus smaller buteos, and midsized accipiters such as the cooper's hawk. Larger kites also qualify for the midsized class. The third class, for the smallest birds, includes the small kites and accipiters, as well as the smallest falcons.

The hawk group's habitat covers the world over, although some restrictions apply. In subtropical and tropical areas, half of the small and midsized hawks are kites. In arctic areas, only the two larger classifications are present.

All hawks usually have gray or brown feathers combined with white. Darker markings are predominant. Kites are generally white.

Large hawks are class B fliers; midsized and small hawks are class A. When diving, all hawks are +2 to hit, and are considered charging for game purposes, thus risking a nasty death should an intended victim manage to break the bird's dive with his spearpoint. To make a dive, the hawk must



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have at least 60' of clearance above the target. If this space is available, all hawks can dive to inflict an extra point of damage with each of their talons, but they cannot strike with their beaks at the end of a dive.

To capture prey, hawks use their speed and keen sight. Their prey ranges from rabbits and pheasants to insects. If an target's eyes are unprotected, a beak attack has a 15% chance of blinding one eye. As familiars, they take meat, preferably fresh, for their ration. Hawks are never surprised.

**KINKAJOU:** These are nocturnal and arboreal animals related to the raccoon. They inhabit tropical and subtropical areas. Although they move slowly on the ground, these animals are good climbers, and they are native only to wooded areas. With their plush brown fur, nimble paws, and prehensile tails, kinkajous seem rather like monkeys. But though their hand-like paws can manipulate objects, they do not exhibit the dexterity most monkeys do. Kinkajous are omnivores. They favor fruit and insects, but familiars also like meat.

**LIZARD:** The many types of lizards that are suited for life as a familiar are divided into two categories by size: large (3-16

pounds), but all are grotesque in form. In tropical areas, half of the small lizards summoned will be abnormally large geckos — nocturnal lizards with very good night vision. Geckos can ascend or descend any surface rougher than polished glass without difficulty. In tropical forested areas, 25% of the respondents to a *find familiar* summons will be chameleons, with all the qualities of their larger brothers as described above.

humans are. Such an ability requires mental as well as physical skill, so although monkeys might learn to handle simple switches and latches, they cannot wield tools or weapons efficiently, even if an attempt is made to train them.

Monkeys that are summoned to be familiars are primarily omnivores; some of the smaller ones are insectivores. All can be fed fruit, nuts, vegetables, and some meat.



*Otters are good swimmers, and can remain underwater for up to 7 rounds.*

*The appearance of small lizards varies according to their environment, but all are grotesque in form.*



pounds) and small (2 pounds or less — still a respectable size). Large lizards are limited to tropical areas. Small lizards also inhabit subtropical climates.

Large lizards are typically long and slender, and they can move quite rapidly for a reptile. These athletic lizards can sprint at 15" for up to 2 rounds, and they swim well. This group includes the monitor lizards and those which resemble them. If they score a hit with their jaws, they can bring their claws into play, and if they consequently score a strike, they'll do a further point of damage. In forested areas, a large chameleon (though this animal is not usually considered part of the lizard group) will respond to the summoning 25% of the time. A chameleon moves no faster than 3", but in natural surroundings it can camouflage itself as well as a pseudodragon does (80% chance of success). Chameleons are good climbers, but slow at it. Large lizards vary in length from 2-4 feet, depending on build and overall weight. They take prey as small as a mouse and as large as a dove, and they will not eat carrion.

Lizards belonging to the smaller category are 1 foot or more in length; if on the shorter side, they are of great girth. Their appearance varies according to their envi-

ronment, but all are grotesque in form. Small lizards eat anything from large insects to mice. They can be fed lean meat.

**MONKEY:** The family of monkeys includes all primates of a size that's suitable for familiars. There are two categories: small, including those of squirrel-size or smaller, weighing 2 pounds or less, and large, which weigh up to 16 pounds. The sorts of monkeys that become familiars only inhabit the tropics.

Small monkeys include marmosets, squirrel monkeys, diurnal lemurs, and the like. Half of those summoned will be nocturnal, e.g. galagos, tarsiers, and small night monkeys. These animals cannot distinguish colors, but make up for it with good night vision. All small monkeys are expert climbers and leapers.

Large monkeys include some of the bigger lemurs, small langurs, and others of similar size. Capuchin monkeys, known for their work with organ-grinders, typify this group. Macaques, baboons, and gibbons are too large to serve as familiars. Of the large monkeys, 15% are nocturnal.

A magic-user who summons a monkey has gained an extra pair of hands — two pairs, if you count the feet. But monkeys are not as proficient at manual tasks as

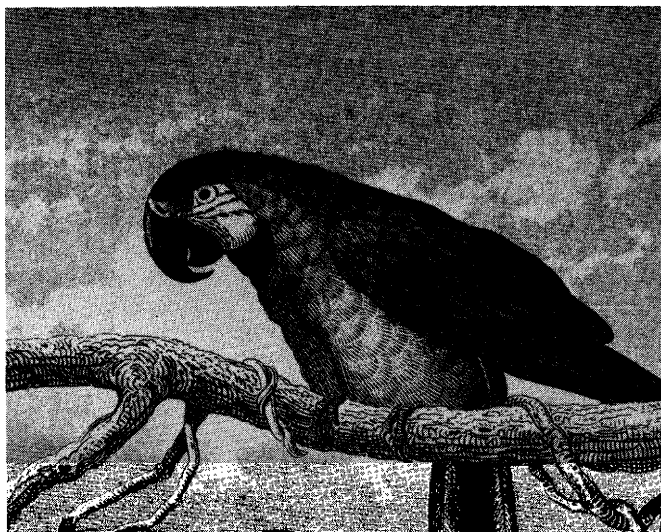


*Although monkeys might learn to handle simple switches and latches, they cannot wield tools or weapons efficiently.*

**OTTER:** Otters live wherever water supports fish and crustaceans — in streams, lakes, and swamps, and at seashores. Native climates range from subarctic to tropical. Otters are good swimmers, and can remain underwater for up to 7 rounds, 5 when active. In most respects, otters resemble their close relatives, the fishers and the weasels. Any characteristics described for the fishers also apply to the otter, except for



*Parrots climb well, using beak and claws. The arrangement of their toes enables them to handle objects.*



manent human settlement exists there. Rat familiars are large, but they do not approach the size of the giant rats from the *Monster Manual*, which seem to be as large as a small to mid-sized dog (according to the damage they do).

Rats are not especially fast, but they climb and swim very well. Given time, they can gnaw through ropes, cords, and even wooden barriers. They eat virtually everything, but treat new foods with suspicion. Of these, they'll take nothing but the tiniest nibble. If afterwards they feel ill, they'll avoid anything with the same or a similar taste. The rat's famed ability to avoid poisons stems from its habits and its good sense of smell.

A rat bite has a 10% chance of infecting the victim with a serious disease, unless a save vs. poison is made.

climbing ability. (Otters can't climb.) Although otters can grow very large, otter familiars never exceed 16 pounds in weight. Otters prefer crustaceans to fish, but they do well on any meat diet.

**OWL:** For game purposes, owls fall into three size categories. The largest birds grow to the size of a great horned owl, mid-sized owls are as big as barn owls, and small owls are no larger than a screech owl. Owls live in all climates and on all sorts of terrain, except for small owls, which never inhabit the arctic.

Most owls hunt at night, but in arctic, subarctic, and open areas, 30% of the owls are diurnal. Diurnal owls possess the same sensory powers as hawks.

No owl has a good sense of smell. In fact, owls are so insensitive to odors that they will hunt skunks. In the AD&D game, not even a troglodyte's odor affects an owl.

Owls have yellow or green eyes and feathers of somber colors. Some arctic owls are an exception, having bright white feathers with black markings. Owls are class B fliers, but they are swift and especially agile, able to move in complete silence. Their feathers are soft, and can muffle the sounds of flight.

**PARROT:** A bird of this sort that serves as a familiar is neither brightly colored nor delicate. Instead, these are the more somber birds of their kind: black macaws, African gray parrots, or the kea of New Zealand, for example. They only inhabit tropical and subtropical areas. As class B fliers, parrots maneuver with fair ability, but exhibit no exceptional talent. They climb well, however, using beak and claws. The arrangement of their toes enables them to handle objects. As familiars, they can "speak" as crows do. They will eat fruit and nuts, as well as some meat. Those with a predatory tendency relish fat, and at least one parrot, the kea, is said to attack young and helpless sheep.

**RACCOON:** These animals need no introduction to those living in the Americas,



*Weasels measure only 1 or 2 feet in length, but they are still renowned for their ferocity.*

*Owls are swift and especially agile, able to move in complete silence.*



where they are found in all climates and terrains that are warmer than subarctic. Tropical raccoons look thinner than their northern kin, but the difference is mostly fur. Although these little, bear-like creatures may weigh up to 50 pounds as adults, some full-grown specimens weigh as little as 3 pounds. Those summoned to be familiars will be no heavier than 16 pounds. Raccoons are good swimmers and climbers. Their dextrous paws can handle simple latches, buttons, and handles, though not as well as a monkey's hands would. Raccoons welcome a wide range of foods, a fact of which most farmers are well aware.

**RAT:** Rats and their rat-like cousins, including a few species of opossum, live everywhere except in some areas with arctic climates; they'll even invade these if a per-

**RAVEN:** These are large members of the crow family. They can be found nearly everywhere, though they tend to avoid populated areas. They are usually gray or black, and have the same vocal talents as common crows. Ravens are largely predatory, but as omnivores, they'll eat whatever is available. Farmers commonly accuse them of harassing or killing livestock, and they are well known for following armies. (Dead soldiers make good meals.) Like crows, ravens are never surprised in lighted conditions, and a hit by a raven's beak has a 10% chance of blinding an eye.

**SKUNK:** These animals are common in temperate to tropical regions. Those that become familiars are the size of a small cat, but they have weaker jaws than a cat. Their fur is black with white markings. According to *Monster Manual II*, skunks can release a 1" x 1" x 1" stinking cloud of musk, which requires all victims in range to make a saving throw vs. poison. Those who succeed must retreat immediately or be considered to have failed the save. Those who fail will be nauseated for 1-4 rounds and must retreat and retch. Each must also save again vs. poison or also be blinded for 1-4 rounds. Normal clothing that contacts the musk must be burned or buried. Flesh, leather, metal, etc., must be washed repeatedly for several days to remove the stench. (Vinegar cuts the smell in 2-3 washings.) Skunks are omnivores, and particularly relish insects.

**SNAKE:** Snakes that become familiars are not the average grass snake or garter snake; they're large serpents up to five feet long. These snakes inhabit temperate to

tropical areas and are typically small boas or pythons, although large individuals of other species may be found. Snakes can maintain top speed over very difficult terrain, and they're good climbers and swimmers. None of the snake familiars are venomous, but all are predatory. They generally eat such things as rats and frogs, though as familiars they will accept raw meat. Once transformed to familiars, these snakes are immune to common clerical spells that affect their kind.

**SQUIRREL:** Squirrel familiars are large, black, and always tree-dwellers. They inhabit any area with trees. Squirrels are swift for their size and can ascend or descend rough wooden surfaces easily. They are excellent climbers and leapers. Like rats, they can gnaw through most organic materials. Squirrels eat fruit, nuts, grain, and sometimes insects.

**TOAD:** The lowly toad is found in any climate but arctic and subarctic, and it will even inhabit desert areas, though this is uncommon. Toad familiars are 6 or more inches long and almost as wide. The largest weigh a pound or more. Toads are usually covered with bumps and tubercles known as "warts," and though most have a drab appearance, some of the tropical species are colorful. Toads can hop up to 7', swim well, and remain underwater almost indefinitely if they must. They eat insects, but larger



*Snakes can maintain top speed over very difficult terrain, and they're good climbers and swimmers.*

**WEASEL:** "Weasel" is broadly used here, as was "fisher" previously. That is, several animals are grouped under this heading for game purposes. In subarctic to subtropical climates, the family includes weasels and their similar-sized kin: stoats, ferrets, polecats, mink, and all the rest. In tropical areas, the term applies to the smaller members of the mongoose clan. Members of this expanded weasel family even inhabit cities, where they may be kept as ratters. The ferret, in fact, is a domestic species. All "weasels" measure only 1 or 2 feet in length, tail included, but they are

a penchant for attacking an opponent's throat. Except as mentioned here, they resemble their larger relatives, the fishers.

#### Adding new familiars

The preceding list of familiars includes most of the world's contemporary animals that would make suitable familiars in the game. DMs may see fit to add completely imaginary creatures as well, using the animals above for comparison. Or DMs may modify the list to accommodate other environments in which AD&D characters may find themselves. For example, in the age of

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animals above would not be present, but mammals of badger size and smaller were present throughout that era. Instead of bats, there would be flying reptiles, probably adapted to daytime flight. There might also be very small animals related to the dinosaurs — bipedal, with good day vision and rapid movement (15"), able to bite for up to 1-3 points of damage depending on size.

If your adventure takes place away from the Prime Material Plane, the normal animal-like inhabitants (if any) would probably be ill-adapted to an adventurer's needs, even if they responded to a call. Natives of the elemental planes, for instance, would find conditions on the Prime Material Plane uncomfortable at best.

#### Encumbrance

Sometimes a familiar must be carried. Perhaps it is wounded or immobilized, or maybe its master simply wants to plant a rear lookout in his backpack. Whatever the reason, toting one's familiar requires knowledge of its encumbrance value.

For the sake of simplicity, all small familiars are considered to have an "encumbrance value" of 100 gp when carried, medium and large-sized familiars 200. These values increase by 50% if the animal is "dead" weight. Included in these estimates are any special arrangements made for carrying the familiar. Weasels and the like can hide under a magician's robes, but a cat is another matter. Certainly some sort

of protection will be required to carry even the most cooperative of hawks — perhaps a leather guard like falconers use.

#### Raining cats and coatis: falling damage

All of the familiars in this article are small, so they should take little damage from a fall. This is because the strength of their bones, and flesh is greater in proportion to their weight than in humans. In addition, a familiar's body has a greater surface area in proportion to its weight. Therefore, it will reach terminal velocity — the point at which air resistance prevents a further increase in falling speed — much sooner than a human body.

The upshot of all these assertions is that a rat can probably survive a fall from the roof of a house (and may even be undamaged by the experience), but a man will take damage and might not survive — and a horse would almost certainly perish. Applying these laws to the AD&D system could prove tiresome, and more complicated than it's worth. But since familiars are so important to magic-users, it's only fair to give the matter *some* consideration. Small animals should receive 0-3 points of damage (1d4 -1) from a fall of 20 feet or less and another 1-3 points (½d6, rounded down) for each additional 20 feet, up to a maximum of 6d3.

#### Intelligence and death

Little consideration has been in this article given to what an animal gains by

becoming a familiar. It's been mentioned that some become hardier in combat, but the animal may also gain intelligence. The *find familiar* spell states that animal familiars are "abnormally intelligent." Even the most abnormally intelligent toad is a dull lump compared to a mouse, so it seems fair that all normal familiars be raised to a standard level of intelligence; otherwise, it will be a great disadvantage to have certain kinds of familiars. All familiars, then, gain an intelligence rating of 4 (the highest semi-intelligent rating), plus some limited ability to plan for the future as humans do. Such intelligence will be qualitatively different from that of humans and demi-humans, however; these animals will not be able to learn speech, not as a human would understand it, anyway.

The Players Handbook states that a magic-user loses twice the number of hit points possessed by his familiar if the familiar is ever "killed." This is due to the tremendous shock caused by unnatural death — but when a familiar dies of old age, there is no penalty to the magic-user. Unfortunately for the familiar, the reverse is not true. When a magic-user dies, for whatever reason, the familiar attached to that magic-user dies, too. This explains why familiars are "absolutely faithful." Indirectly causing or allowing a master to die means suicide for a familiar; therefore, the health and well-being of a familiar's master should be the creature's utmost concern.

¶

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by David E. Cates

# Dragons are Wizards' Best Friends

Some unfamiliar familiars for deserving mages

**T**his article describes five unusual relatives of the faerie dragon. They were created in my campaign to be "greater familiars," the familiars of spell-casters of high levels who would find a normal familiar to be a handicap rather than a benefit. However, I found myself planning adventures and encounters with these creatures that had nothing to do with their being familiars. My adventuring group was soon surrounded by quicklings wielding lances and riding demon drakes, and later a group of shadow drakes set out to prove which one was the greatest prankster—at the PCs' expense.

These familiars are intended for wizards and illusionists of at least 12th level. Since the spell *find familiar* is not among those first-level wizard spells available to illusionists, some means must be found to let illusionists acquire these familiars, such as the use of *wish* rings. Deities might grant a favored cleric or druid an animal companion that is, to all intents and purposes, a familiar. Certain spell-casting dragons in my campaign world have used their own version of the *find familiar* spell, and they acquire these lesser dragons as their own familiars!

Care must be taken with these familiars. They should not be allowed in the game unless the wizards they bond with are able to protect and care for them. They are not intended to be mobile spell-casting devices for each spell-caster's pleasure, but they are generally powerful enough to survive battles where high-level magic is being tossed around. If lower-level wizards want such familiars, the familiars should be young, very young, or perhaps even in egg form when acquired. It should be very rare for a very old or ancient lesser dragon to become a familiar, as such dragons are the patriarchs of their dragon-tribes and are necessary for the defense of their lairs.

In all cases, these lesser dragons have the same age categories as do dragons, as given in *the Monster Manual*, page 29, but otherwise share none of the usual characteristics of dragons unless so noted. Hit dice are rerolled at each age level, rather than increasing the number of hit points per hit die.

## Crystal Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-6  
ARMOR CLASS: 2  
MOVE: 9"/18" (MC: A)  
HIT DICE: *See Table 1*  
% IN LAIR: 20%  
TREASURE TYPE: *E, Q*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite and 2 claws  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See Table 1*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Minor breath weapon, up to major spell use*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spell immunities, magic resistance, high intelligence, ethereal travel, special minor powers from eating gems, up to major spell use*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 2*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low to high*  
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*  
SIZE: S (*see Table 1*)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
CHANCE OF:  
    Speaking: 90%  
    Magic use: 50%  
    Sleeping: 30%  
LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to VI/775 + 6 per hit point (maximum age and abilities)*

This nomadic offshoot of the faerie dragon prefers caves and caverns in uncivilized deserts for its lairs, but lone wanderers may be found in any clime, especially near gem deposits. Some clans led by ancient crystal drakes have found their ways into the plane of elemental Earth, where they seek gems.

Crystal drakes are noted for their scintillating, crystal-like hides, and some unscrupulous hunters trap and kill these wondrous creatures to gain their skins. Crystal drake hides are popular in many lands and make beautiful leather apparel that flashes and sparkles in the light. Even lands that have outlawed the sale of crystal drake hides usually have buyers for these illegal goods. An unmarred hide from a mature, adult crystal drake brings as much as 1,000 gp. The crystal drake's hide is the prime component of a *robe of scintillating colors*, but such hides must be specially gathered and treated to be used for this purpose. The same hide that causes these miniature dragons to be hunted also gives them an unusually low armor class and immunity to many spells.

Though crystal drakes enjoy a good joke, they play their tricks only when they will not bring attention to their lairs. They often spy upon a passing group of intelligent creatures known to be carrying gems; if they satisfy themselves that the creatures are safe to trade with, these drakes might offer to trade gold and other items for jewels. This trading always takes place some distance from their lairs, as crystal drakes have learned to be very wary of travelers—even friendly ones.

Crystal drakes can spit acid four times a day. They expel this acid with great force

and accuracy (gaining a +4 to hit). This acid does double damage against creatures or objects composed of earth, stone, or crystal (see Table 1).

All ancient crystal drakes are known to have the ability to go ethereal once per week, and they have the ability to transport up to four of their clan members with them. These ancient drakes often use this ability to travel to and forage on the plane of elemental Earth, as well as to escape capture or worse.

Because of the nature of crystal-drake hides and their inherent magical abilities, some spells behave in an odd manner when used against such a creature. *Color spray*, *energy drain*, *hypnotic pattern*, *lightning* and other electrical attacks like *shocking grasp*, and *sunray* spells are instantly reflected back upon the caster. *Magic missiles* are reflected back to the caster only if the drake makes a saving throw vs. wands, harming the drake if the saving throw is failed. *Eyebite*, *prismatic sphere*, *prismatic spray*, *prismatic wall*, and *rainbow pattern* spells have no effect on the drakes. *Light* and continual light spells cannot blind them—however, these latter two spells, if successfully cast on a crystal drake, blind anyone within 20' who fails a saving throw vs. spells. This blindness lasts 2-12 rounds.

Only 50% of all crystal drakes have the ability to cast spells throughout their lives. Fully 50% of these spell-casters choose to cast wizard spells; 20% become shamans of their lairs and have both cleric and illusionist spells, like a multiclassed character. Another 15% cast only illusionist spells, and 15% cast only druid spells. As they progress in age, their spell-casting abilities increase, as shown in Table 2. Old crystal drakes that have no previous spell-casting talents always develop the ability to cast cleric spells as a 1st-level cleric. They gain one additional level of spell-casting ability with each following age level, becoming 3rd-level clerics at ancient age. Most spell-casting powers are taught by the elders of each group of crystal drakes, through a teaching process that involves no writing or spell books. Cleric and druid spells, however, appear to be granted by an unknown power perhaps a demigod.

Crystal drakes are very fond of jewels, gems, and crystals. They each have two cheek pouches, much like hamsters, in which they can store up to four gems. Their senses of smell and taste are very keen, and they can actually sense the presence of precious stones within 10'. Indeed, crystals, gems, and jewels are a necessary part of a crystal drake's diet. Each drake must consume at least 5 gp of gems per week, or its hide loses its crystal-line sheen and the powers associated with it. A crystal drake loses one point of armor class per week without the diet of gems, down to a minimum of AC 5. Once its proper diet is reestablished, it gains its

Table 1  
Crystal Drakes' Statistics

Crystal drake age	Length	Hit dice	Bite damage	Claw damage	Breath weapon	Base AC
Very young	1'	½	1	0	0	7
Young	1'6"	1	1-2	0	1	6
Sub-adult	1'9"	1+3	1-3	0	1-2	5
Young adult	2'	2	1-4	1	1-3	4
Adult	2'3"	3	1-6	1	1-4	3
Old	2'6"	4	1-6	1-2	1-6	2
Very old	2'6"	5	2-8	1-3	2-8	1
Ancient	2'6"	5+3	2-8	1-4	2-8	0

armor class back at the same rate. For each week without a gem diet, there is a cumulative 25% chance that its spell-reflecting power will not function. After one month without eating the required amount of gemstones, the crystal drake's immunity to the spells given above is lost, and its hide becomes a dull gray. Even if the specific spell immunity is lost, the crystal drake still retains its natural resistance to magic.

Ingesting certain gemstones has strange effects upon crystal drakes. They are aware of these effects and often carry

some of these gems in their mouth pouches for emergencies. For a gemstone to affect a crystal drake, a minimum amount of that particular gem must be consumed. These gems and effects are given in Table 3. Only one of these gem effects can be in effect at one time. If a new gem is ingested before the effects of the last gem is over, the prior effects are lost.

Crystal drakes speak their own language, their alignment tongue, and 1-4 other languages, as chosen by the DM.

Crystal Drake



Illustration by Paul Jaquays



**Table 2**  
**Crystal Drakes' Spell Abilities**

Crystal drake age	Magic resistance	Wizard level	Cleric level	Druid level	Illusionist level
Very young	5%	0 *	0 **	0 ***	0 ****
Young	10%				
Sub-adult	12%	1	1	1	1
Young adult	15%	2	2	2	2
Adult	20%	3	3	3	3
Old	25%	4	4	4	4
Very old	30%	5	5	5	5
Ancient	35%	6	6	6	6

\* At this age, the crystal drake may use four magic-user (wizard) cantrips, as per *Unearthed Arcana*.

\* \* At this age, the crystal drake may use four clerics' orisons, as per DRAGON® issue #108, "Cantrips for Clerics."

\* \* \* At this age, the crystal drake may use four druidical orisons, as per DRAGON issue #108, "Cantrips for Clerics," and issue #119, "Cantrips for Druids—Naturally."

\* \* \* \* At this age, the crystal drake may use four illusionist cantrips, as per *Unearthed Arcana*.

**Note:** All crystal drakes of sub-adult age or older are able to substitute four cantrips or orisons in place of a first-level spell.

**Table 3**  
**Crystal Drakes' Special Gem Powers**

Gemstone type	Min. gp value consumed	Effect and duration
Alexandrite	100	Adds +2 to saving throws for one turn
Amber	100	Grants immunity to disease for 3 rounds, or cures same
Amethyst	100	Grants immunity to paralysis and poison for 1 turn, or cures same
Beryl	100	Improves armor class by two steps for 1 turn
Carbuncle	100	Allows use of polymorph <i>self</i> into dragon form 10 X larger in size, once per week
Chrysoprase	100	Grants <i>improved invisibility</i> (as per the illusionist spell) for 2-8 rounds
Coral	100	Grants immunity to insanity for 10 turns, or cures same
Hematite	10	Heals 1-4 hp damage, up to four times per day
Jacinth	250	Grants a + 1 on all saving throws and armor class for 2-8 hours
Jasper	50	Grants +4 to saving throws vs. poison for 1 turn, or allows for a new saving throw at + 4 if consumed after eater was poisoned
Lapis lazuli	50	Adds + 1 to to-hit scores for 1 turn
Peridot	250	Adds +4 to all saving throws for 1 turn
Ruby	100	Adds + 2 to saving throws, and acts as a luckstone, for 1 turn
Sapphire	250	Allows the casting of known spells only as if one level higher, only once per day
Topaz	250	Creates a <i>minor globe of invulnerability</i> around the eater for 1 turn

**Note:** See the 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pages 26-27, for the possible effects of other consumed gems.

**Table 4**  
**Demon Drakes' Statistics**

Demon drake age	Magic resistance	Hit dice	Length	Claw damage	Butt damage *	Breath damage (major)	Breath damage (minor)
Very young	12%	½	1'	-	1	1-4	1
Young	18%	1	1'6"	1	1-2	1-4	1
Sub-adult	24%	1 + 3	2'	1	1-3	1-6	1-2
Young adult	30%	2	2'3"	1	1-4	1-6	1-3
Adult	36%	2 + 3	2'6"	1	1-4	1-8	1-4
Old	42%	3	2'9"	1-2	1-6	2-8	1-4
Very old	48%	4	3'	1-2	1-6	1-10	1-6
Ancient	54%	5	3'3"	1-3	2-8	1-10	1-6

\* Damage from biting is equal to the butt-damage value minus 1 hp, with a minimum value of 1 hp damage.

# Demon Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-4  
ARMOR CLASS: 5  
MOVE: 9"/24" (MC: A)  
HIT DICE: *See Table 4*  
% IN LAIR: 25%  
TREASURE TYPE: S, Z  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and either 1 head butt or 1 bite  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See Table 4*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, up to major spell use*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Invisibility, fire resistance, magic resistance, high intelligence, up to major spell use*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 4*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Average to high*  
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral, chaotic evil*  
SIZE: S (1-3' long)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
CHANCE OF:  
    Speaking: 90%  
    Magic use: 80%  
    Sleeping: 30%  
LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to V/400 + 5 per hit point (maximum age and abilities)*

Demon drakes appear to be miniature red dragons with sharp, devilish horns on the tops of their heads and fixed, evil grins. Females have orange underbellies; males are red all over.

Demon drakes usually live near or in volcanic vents, but they can also be found in caverns and many barren-landscapes. Small groups of demon drakes often associate with salamanders and lair nearby. Quicklings are known to form alliances with demon drakes and ride them into battle.

Demon drakes are naturally resistant to fires, as per *rings of fire resistance*. They can also use *improved invisibility* on themselves twice per day, being able to attack and cast spells without turning visible.

The demon drake has two forms of cone-shaped fiery breath weapons. The cone shape of the major attack form is ¼" in diameter at the drake's mouth, and it spreads out until it is 3' wide at its far end. The cone of flame is 8' long; see Table 4 for damage statistics, which are based on age (half damage is take if the victim makes a saving throw vs. breath weapons). This attack form may be made only four times per day. Demon drakes may also breath a lesser amount of fire an unlimited number of times per day. This minor breath weapon is only 4' long and 2' across at the far end. Demon drakes are immune to other demon drakes' breath weapons.

Demon drakes are not really vicious in nature, but they defend their lairs with great single-mindedness. In such cases, they attack as if they had two additional hit dice, and their breath weapons do an additional 1-4 hp damage. Like the faerie dragons, demon drakes are infamous for



Demon Drake

their practical jokes and go out of their ways to plan and execute them. However, their practical jokes go beyond what might be considered funny or safe, sometimes resulting in real harm to the victims.

Demon drakes able to use spells will employ illusionist spells, but as they grow older, they gain a small selection of wizard and cleric spells. Unlike their cousins, their spells are not selected only on the basis of their mischief potential. Spell-casting demon drakes gain spells at the same rate that illusionists do, each hit die equaling a level. One in 24 magic-using demon drakes is a lair shaman and gains both cleric and illusionist spells at the same time, like a multiclassed character. Spell-casting demon drakes also gain one first-level wizard spell at old, very old, and ancient ages each. All demon drakes (even those that do not normally use spells) gain a first-level cleric spell at ancient age, including lair shamans, who have that spell in addition to their others. Most spells are taught by the elders of the demon drake group, except for the cleric spells, which appear to be gained from an unknown source.

Demon drakes also have unique spells that the elders of their race pass on to deserving youths who manage to prepare

and execute what are referred to as "grandmaster" practical jokes. These practical jokes must be fairly subtle and affect at least a small community of creatures or a single creature whose innate power is such that the joke deserves merit. Creating an illusion of human women bathing in cool water, tempting a hunter to wade into lava, is a basic practical joke not worthy of grandmaster status. If the "women" were actually female goblins, encountered on multiple occasions by an elite patrol, the joke might be worth consideration.

Demon drakes sometimes kidnap and ransom elven, half-elven, halfling, human, brownie, leprechaun, pixie, quickling, and sprite maidens. During their time of capture, these maids are treated like princesses by the entire tribe. The ransom demand might be a minor quest to benefit the tribe or the payment of some valuable item the tribe desires. However, depending upon their infatuation with their new "princess," the demon drakes might gift her with treasures worth double the ransom they demand. It is an honor to be kidnapped by demon drakes—at least, in the eyes of the kidnappers. They allow the maid to leave after six months even if no ransom is paid. It is considered an insult if they return the maiden prematurely.

Demon drake clans are located near some source of sulfur, hence their preoccupation with lairing in or near volcanic vents. They must consume a few ounces of sulfur every week, or their fiery breath weakens. After several weeks without sulfur, the damage from their breath is reduced by half (round fractions down).

Demon drakes speak a variant of the faerie-dragon language as well as their alignment tongue. Most also speak salamander, quickling, elven, leprechaun, or pixie. They have 120' infravision and excellent night sight.

The following are three unique demon drake spells. A young-adult demon drake has usually earned at least one unique first-level spell, while an old demon drake might have all three spells that follow, as well as others the DM might create.

#### **Pretty—Oops!** (Illusion/Alteration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 round

Duration: *Special* ST: *Negates*

Area of Effect: ½ cubic foot

Explanation/Description: This spell may be cast upon small living creatures or small inanimate objects. If cast upon a

living creature, the creature is allowed a saving throw vs. paralysis, or it is paralyzed for 5-8 hours. Each hour after the fourth hour, the creature is entitled to another saving throw. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature immediately recovers. If still paralyzed at the end of eight hours, the creature automatically recovers. A piece of wool, bird down, or similar item is required for casting the spell.

When the spell is cast, the demon drake concentrates upon the illusory form it wishes the object or victim to take. The form should be of the same approximate shape and size of the object or creature upon which the spell is cast. A poisonous snake might be transformed into a jeweled dagger, a hornet's nest into a sealed container, and a cockatrice into a sleeping lap dog.

Should a creature or object with *pretty—oops!* be touched or take damage, it automatically transforms into its original form. Detect illusion spells reveal this magical disguise for what it is.

#### **Slither—Hiss!** (Illusion/Evocation)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M

Range: 30' CT: 1 round

Duration: 24 hours ST: *Negates*

Area of Effect: 10' diameter sphere

Explanation/Description: Demon drakes use this spell to guard their caverns from intruders. The spell is closely related to *magic mouth* but with a twist. The material component of this spell is a lizard skin or snake skin. The spell is able to discern between different creatures as does the *magic mouth* spell, and can be programmed to activate against a specific type of intruder.

When the spell is activated by an intruding creature, a rustling, slithering sound is heard, seeming to come from farther inside the cave or in the direction the intruder is traveling. This sound is discernible whether the intruder is noisy or quiet. The sound is obviously that of something large and serpentine. Each intruding creature is allowed a saving throw vs. spells; those that fail to save become uneasy and catch glimpses of something huge and foreboding in most every shadow and crevice. These victims each fall prey to a *spook* spell 1-4 rounds later, if they remain within the spell's area of effect.

**Table 5**  
**Faerie Dragons' Ages and Spells**

Belly color	Magic resistance	Age	Hit dice	Mage spells				Druid spells			
				C	1	2	3	C	1	2	3
Red	20%	Very young	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Red-orange	25%	Young	2+2	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Orange	30%	Sub-adult	2+4	4	0	0	0	4	1	0	0
Yellow	35%	Young adult	3	4	1	0	0	4	2	1	0
Green	40%	Adult	3+2	4	2	0	0	4	3	2	0
Blue-green	45%	Old	3+4	4	3	1	0	5	4	2	0
Blue	55%	Very old	4	5	4	2	0	5	5	3	0
Violet	60%	Ancient	5	5	5	2	1	5	5	4	1

**Table 6**  
**Faerie Drakes' Attacks and Immunities**

Body color	Breath weapon's type and frequency	Breath weapon's shape and dimensions	Attack type immunity
Black	Acid, 3 X /day	Line shaped, ½" X 40'	Acid
Blue	Electric bolt, 3 X /day	Line shaped, 1" X 30'	Electricity
Brass	<i>Fear</i> gas, 4 X /day	Cloud shaped, see below	Poison
Bronze	<i>Repulsion</i> gas, 5 X /day	Cloud shaped, see below	Electricity
Copper	Slow venom, 5 X /day	Line shaped, ½" X 40'	Acid
Gold	Fire or chlorine gas, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Fire and poison
Green	Chlorine gas, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Poison
Red	Fire, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Fire
Silver	Frost cone, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Cold
White	<i>Paralyzing</i> gas, 3 X /day	Cloud shaped, see below	Cold

#### **Breath weapon notes:**

*Line shaped:* This breath weapon starts at the creature's mouth and stretches out toward the target in a straight line. Each type of this breath weapon has its own diameter and range as shown. Diameters are given in real inches.

*Cloud shaped:* This breath weapon billows forth from the drake's mouth to form a 5' X 5' cloud, 2' high, around its target.

*Cone shaped:* This breath weapon begins at the drake's mouth (here, the cloud is ¼" in diameter) and spreads out to 3' wide at its end. The cone-shaped cloud is 8' long.



**Pretty—Boom!** (Illusion/Evocation/Alteration)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 round

Duration: 24 hours ST: 1/2

Area of Effect: 10' sphere

Explanation/Description: The material component for this spell is a gem of at least 1 gp value. When cast, the gem takes on the appearance of a gem of 10-100 times its real value. This enchantment lasts exactly 24 hours. At the end of this time, the gem explodes with great force, doing 3-12 hp damage to anyone within 5'. Those within 10' are allowed a saving throw vs. wands; if successful, they take half damage. The explosion is based upon force, not fire. The burst produces shrapnel-like shards capable of turning a backpack, bag, or pouch into shreds while still doing damage to the bearer of the item. If the gem explodes in a *bag of holding* or *portable hole*, the item is destroyed, but the bearer of the bag or hole takes no damage.

The caster of the spell may dispel this spell before it explodes simply by speaking a command word within 10' of the gem. Only the caster can so deactivate the *pretty—boom!* gem, even if another spellcaster knows the command word. *Dispel magic* works normally against this spell.

Alternately, the demon drake may choose not to have the gem explode. Instead, the gem might evaporate into a *stinking cloud*, as per the wizard spell, or might explode with a great noise but doing only 1 hp damage and creating a 20'-diameter cloud of sulfurous smoke lasting one turn.

## Faerie Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-8

ARMOR CLASS: 4

MOVE: 6"/24"/9" (MC: A)

HIT DICE: *See Table 5*

% IN LAIR: 25%

TREASURE TYPE: S, T, U

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-2/1-2/1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Minor breath weapon, minor spell use*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Magic resistance, invisibility minor defensive powers, minor spell use, spell immunities*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 5*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low to average*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral, chaotic neutral*

SIZE: *S (1½-2' long)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

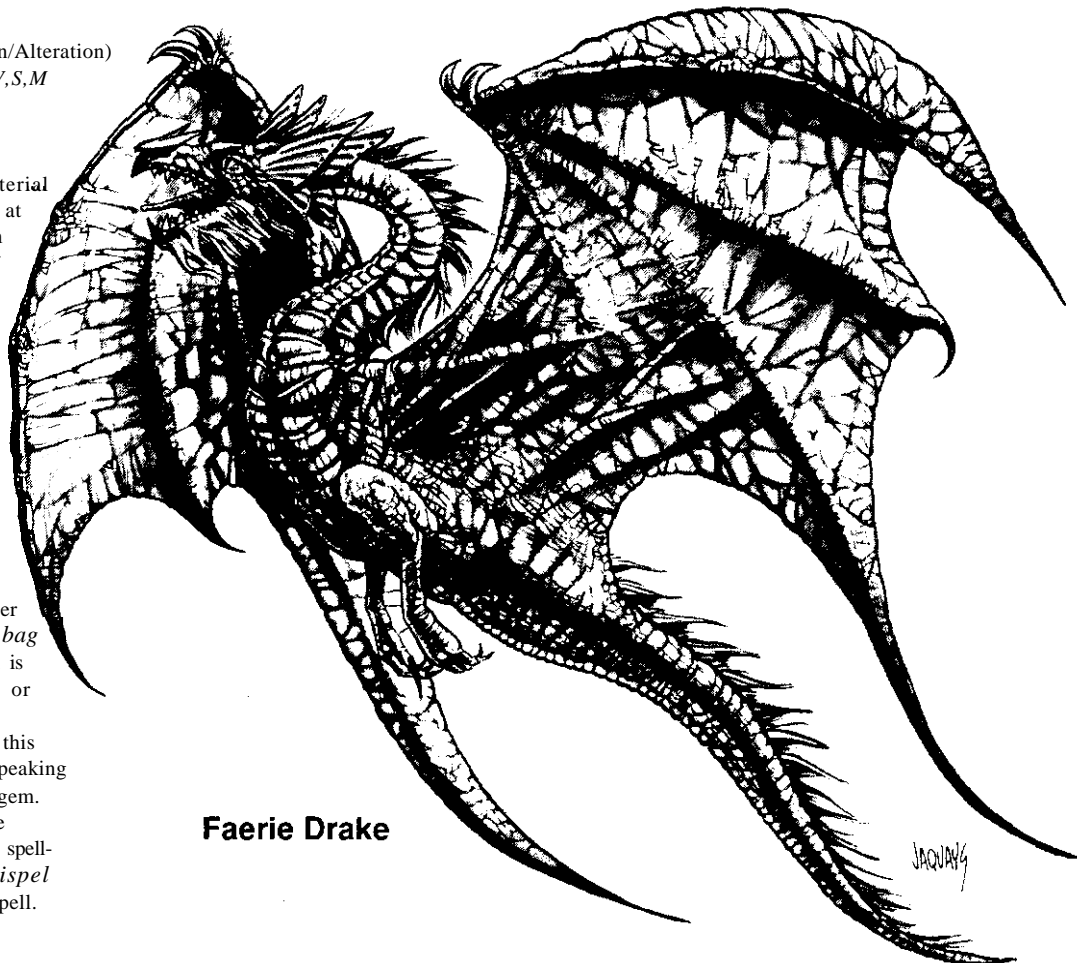
CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 80%

Magic use: 100%

Sleeping: 30%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to V/365 + 5 per hit point (maximum age and abilities)*



**Faerie Drake**

The faerie drake is a close relative of the faerie dragon. It is slightly larger than its cousin but has its own distinctive appearance and abilities. Faerie drakes look like miniature dragons with striped or spotted wings, prehensile tails, and a metallic sheen to their wings and scales. Females have wing tips with a shade of color lighter than their body color. Males have wing tips darker than their body color and also have a stronger metallic sheen than females. The underbelly scale color denotes a faerie dragon's age (see Table 5).

Faerie drakes have innate spell abilities that slowly increase as they grow older. Only drakes of young adult and older ages have offensive spells. Most prefer spells

useful in their everyday lives (as selected by the DM); such spells are taught by the older members of a faerie drake group. Faerie drakes have been known to associate with and spy upon wizards and druids, especially while the latter learn and cast their spells. It is conjectured that watching such activities enables faerie drakes to learn spells other than those they acquire early in life.

A faerie drake's body color reveals what sort of breath weapon and attack immunity it possesses (see Table 6). The bronze faerie drake's *repulsion* gas causes opponents to move away from the faerie drake for six rounds unless they successfully make saving throws vs. dragon breath.

**Table 7**

### Faerie Drake's Innate Defenses

**Wing**

**markings**

Black *Obscurement*, 3 X /day

Blue *Blink*, 3 X /day

Brass *Mirror image*, 3 X /day

Bronze *Scare*, 3 X /day

Copper *En tangle*, 4 X /day

Gold *Polymorph self*, 2 X /day

Green *Regeneration*, perm.

Red *Haste*, 1 X /day

Silver *Gaseous form*, 2 X /day

White *Control temperature*, 3 X /day

**Duration or level of abilities**

As per druid spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 5th level of ability

As per druid spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 7th level of ability  
1 hp/six turns

As per mage spell at 7th level of ability

As per potion, with a duration equal to the faerie dragons' hit dice in turns

As per druid spell at 6th level of ability

The copper faerie drake's slow venom causes victims to move and attack at one-half normal unless they make their saving throw vs. dragon breath; this effect lasts for six rounds. All other attacks do damage equal to the drake's hit points, or half that if a save vs. dragon breath is successfully made.

The color of a faerie dragon's wing markings is related to its innate magical defense, as shown in Table 7. These magical defenses often mimic wizard or druid spells, but they come into effect at will.

Like faerie dragons, faerie drakes can become invisible at will. They also have 120' infravision and very keen senses of smell. These drakes are very fond of swimming, diving, and fishing; one can stay submerged and active for up to three turns, or twice that if inactive. While submerged, they move through the water with great speed and maneuverability. They are even more at home in the air, being able to hover and dart about. Faerie drakes are omnivores and enjoy fish, berries, and small-animal meat. They usually mate for life. If encountered in a lair, there is a 10% chance that 1-4 faerie drake eggs are concealed in the nest.

## Shadow Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-3

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 9"/24" (MC: A)

HIT DICE: *See Table 8*

% IN LAIR: 25%

TREASURE TYPE: Q, T, U

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 *bite*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Major spell use, major darkness/shadow powers, surprise bonus in darkness*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *High intelligence, create darkness, astral travel, magic resistance, major spell use, major darkness/shadow powers*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 8*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average to high*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral, chaotic neutral*

SIZE: *S (See Table 8)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 90%

Magic use: 30%

Sleeping: 40%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to VI/750 + 6 per hit dice (maximum age and abilities)*

The shadow drake enjoys dark caves and heavily shadowed, peaceful forests. Sometimes one lairs near a group of pixies or brownies. Unlike other lesser dragons, they do not avoid civilized areas, sometimes creeping into cities at night. Their statistics are in Table 8.

A shadow drake has an unusual innate power. In darkness or heavy shadows, it seems to merge with the shadows, becoming *invisible* even to ultravision and infra-

vision. This drake enjoys stealth and is almost noiseless in flight, surprising foes five in six times if the area is in shadow or darkness. This drake can attack from shadows or darkness without becoming visible to prey. Its tiny talons are retractable and very sharp. Shadow drakes have no breath weapons.

All shadow drakes have the innate ability to create *darkness* twice per day as per the illusionist spell, except that such *darkness* lasts for 24 hours. They can also create a smaller area of *darkness*, as per the spell except that it lasts only five minutes and is 10' across; this power may be used at will. If cast upon a creature that does not make its saving throw vs. spells, this spell blinds the victim for the spell's duration.

Once a shadow drake has access to an area of magical *darkness* (even self-created), it can enter that *darkness*, wherein it can utilize other innate abilities.

The first ability is to create a *shadow duplicate* of itself. This power is like the illusionist spell *shades*, except that the

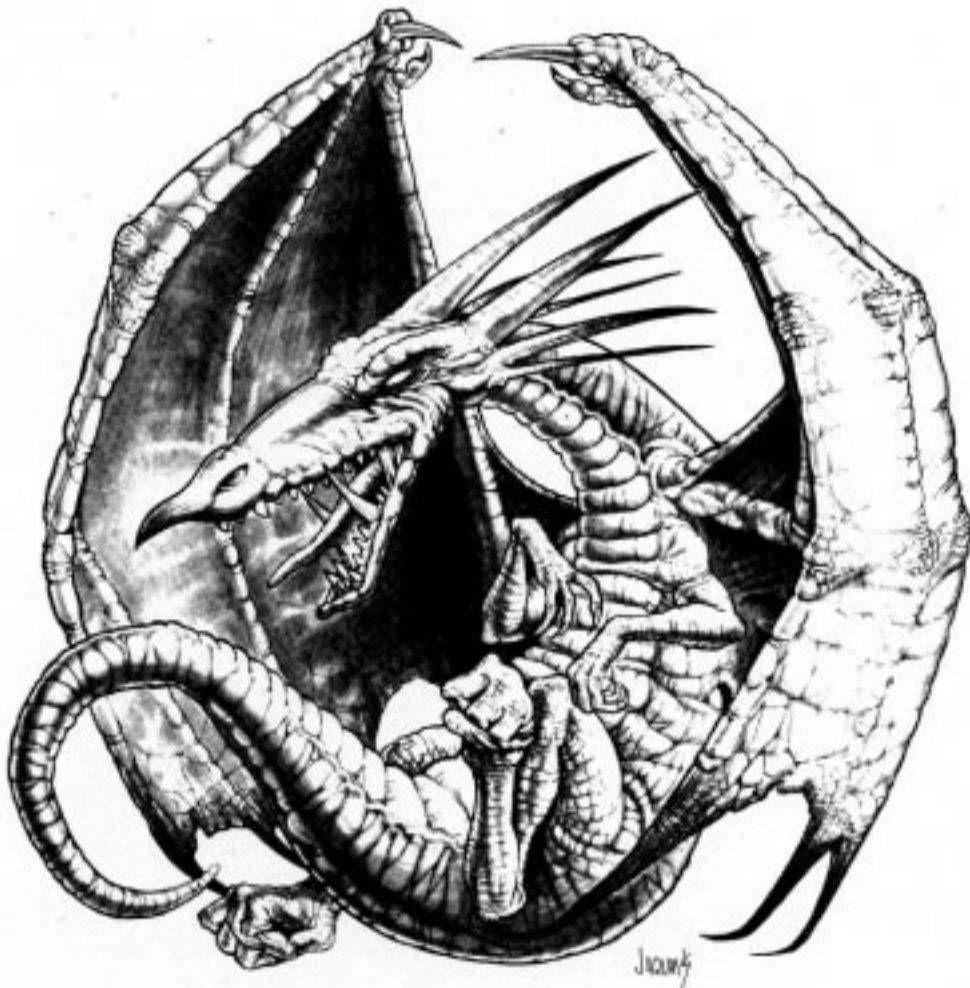
type of *shadow monster* created is an illusionary duplicate of the shadow drake without magical ability. This *shadow duplicate* cannot be told from the original, as per the illusionist spell *mirror image*. This power can be used but once per day.

The second ability is to duplicate the effects of the illusionist spell *demi-shadow monsters*. There are no restrictions to this spell-like ability, and any creature the shadow drake can imagine can be created. This spell is always cleverly used to create a monster to cause the most disruption possible. This power may be used twice per day.

The third ability available to shadow drakes while in magical *darkness* is *rope trick*, as per the illusionist spell. The shadow drake can hide in this extradimensional space for the duration of the spell, even if the magical *darkness* is dispelled. This power can be used twice per day.

The shadow drake is a shy creature and often uses a *shadow duplicate* to lure creatures away from its lair. Some shadow drakes have magical abilities, having

## Shadow Drake



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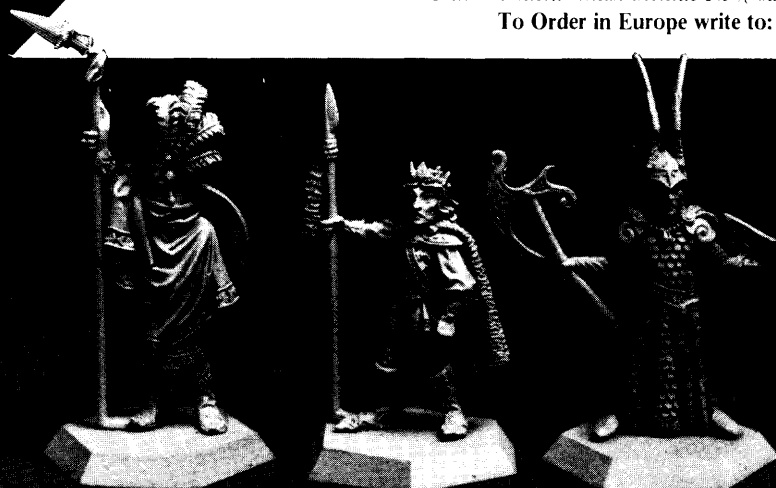
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**Table 8**  
**Shadow Drakes' Ages and Spells**

Shadow drake age	Hit dice	Size	Magic resistance	Illusionist spells (levels)				
				Cantrips	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Very young	2	6"	10%	0	0	0	0	0
Young	3	1'	15%	1	0	0	0	0
Sub-adult	3+3	1'6"	20%	3	1	0	0	0
Young adult	4	1'9"	25%	4	2	0	0	0
Adult	4+3	2'	30%	4	2	1	0	0
Old	5	2'3"	35%	4	3	2	0	0
Very old	5+2	2'6"	40%	4	4	3	1	0
Ancient	5+4	2'9"	50%	5	4	4	2	1

learned to cast illusionist spells from elder members of their species (though some learn spells from gnome or human illusionists in the vicinity). These spells are mostly defensive in nature but never include spells such as color spray, dancing lights, and other spells that create or involve light. See Table 8 for details.

Shadow drakes love beautiful jewels and

go to any length to secure them. They eat fruits and honey but often supplement their diets with small rodents and insects. Shadow drakes look like small dragons of an ash-gray color. While shy, they are also very curious and have been known to form temporary relationships with gnome, elfen, and human spell-casters. They are particularly fond of illusionists.

Ancient shadow drakes gain the power to shift to the Astral plane and back once per month. They can take no other shadow drakes with them. Shadow drakes of very old and ancient ages are known to have one further power, that of being able to *dimension door* from one area of magical shadow to another within a one-mile radius.

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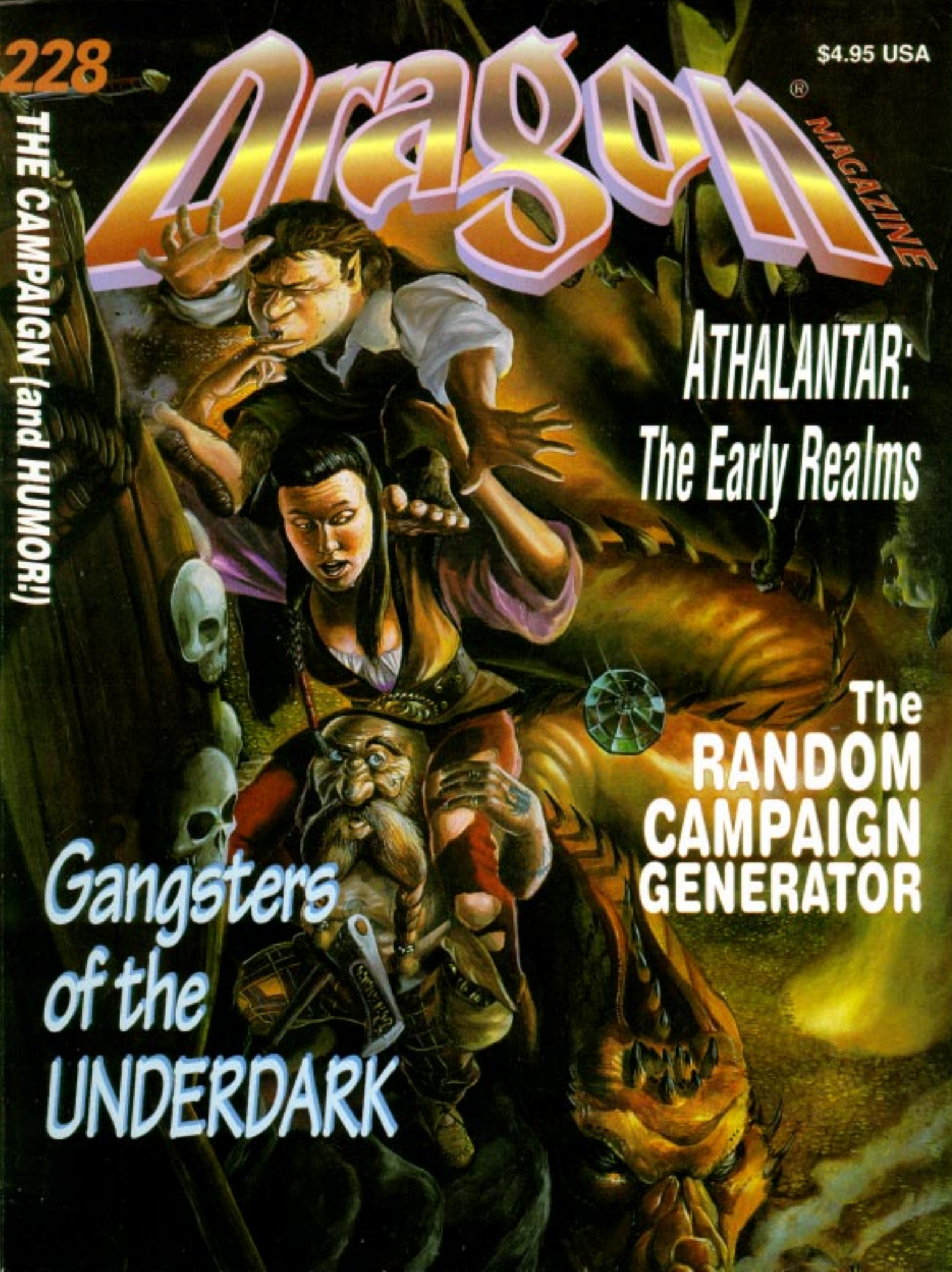
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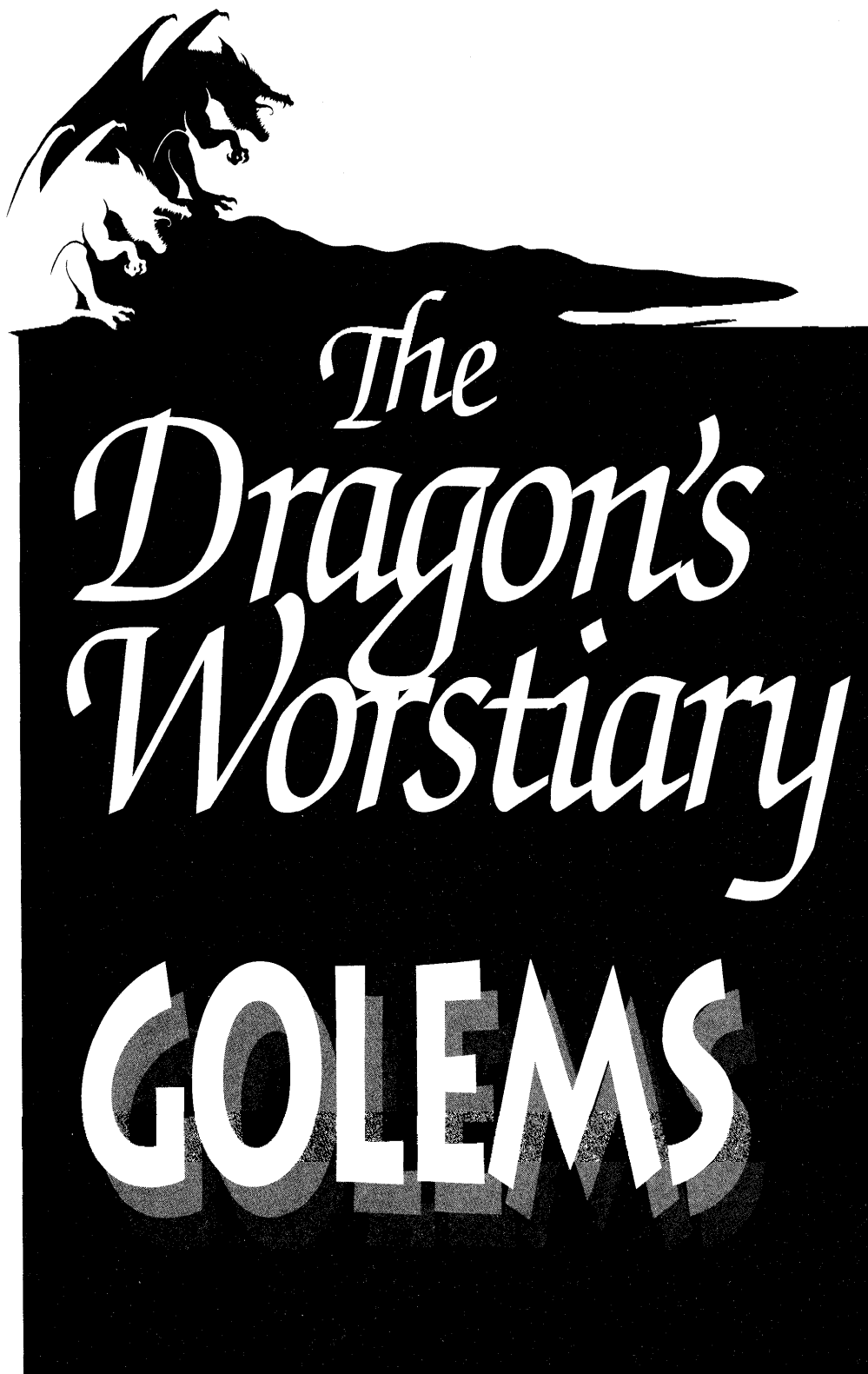
THE CAMPAIGN (and HUMOR!)

ATHALANTAR:  
The Early Realms

The  
RANDOM  
CAMPAIGN  
GENERATOR

Gangsters  
of the  
UNDERDARK





Golems are potent symbols of just what high-powered magics can do. They are at once terrifying and awe-inspiring.

Sometimes the powerful mages and priests who create these monstrosities try their hands at making something different, and a new class of golems comes into being.

Sometimes, in disgust, they throw away their notes.

Unfortunately, these notes are sometimes found.

Witness the chia golem, chocolate golem, and the horrid plush golem.

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by Anne Brown

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illustrated by Dan Burr

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# Chocolate Golem

**CLIMATE/TERRAIN:** Any  
**FREQUENCY:** Rare  
**ORGANIZATION:** Solitary  
**ACTIVITY CYCLE:** Any  
**DIET:** Nil  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Non- (0)  
**TREASURE:** Special  
**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**NO. APPEARING:** 1  
**ARMOR CLASS:** 10  
**MOVEMENT:** 6  
**HIT DICE:** 6 or 1  
**THACO:** 15 or Nil  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 2 or 0  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1d4/1d4  
**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** Breath weapon  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Nil  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** Nil  
**SIZE:** L (7' tall)  
**MORALE:** Fearless (19)  
**XP VALUE:** 650 or 0

A chocolate golem is a sight never to be forgotten. Stories describe chocolate golems of every size and shape, including giant rabbits, chicks, dragons, reindeer, scarecrows, humans, humanoids, vampires, and other fantastic creatures.

Two types are known: hollow and solid. Bittersweet, milk, or even white or flavored chocolate may be used in construction. The hollow chocolate golem requires at least 500 lbs. of the finest quality chocolate. The chocolate may be poured into a specially created mold or may be sculpted and the middle hollowed out. Making the solid chocolate golem requires at least a 1,000 lb. block of fine chocolate. The golem is then sculpted from the single block.

Either golem may be embellished with edible paints, frosting, or small candies.

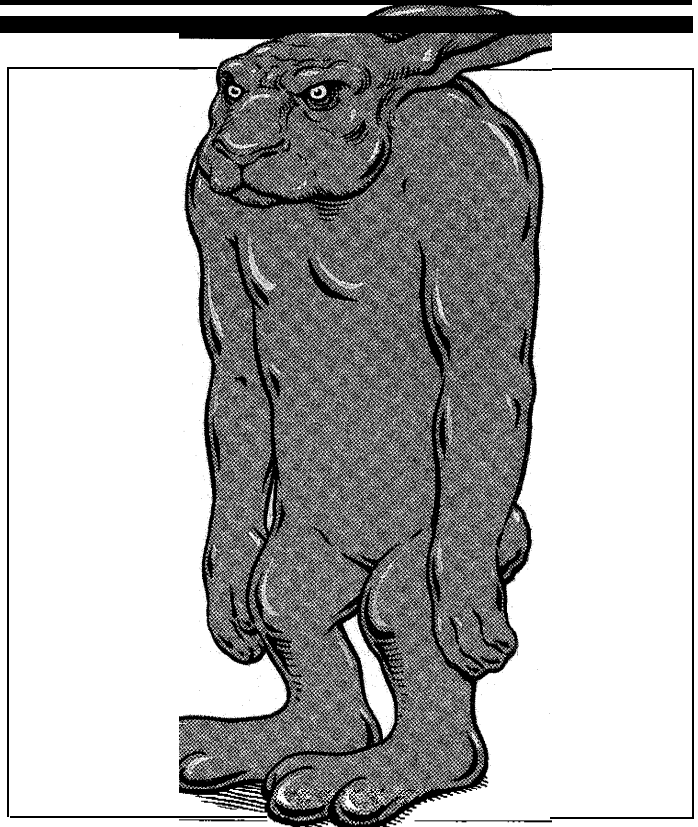
**Combat:** The deluxe chocolate golem (6 HD) typically serves similar purposes as other golems – as sentry or guard. They are sometimes used as security for large parties thrown by kings and other royalty. They appear to be nothing more than edible room decorations but can be ordered to attack. Thus, the golems offer a more innocuous presence than armed guards.

The deluxe golem attacks with both fists for 1d4 hp damage each. Approximately 25% of deluxe golems also have a breath weapon of sorts. Such golems are filled with fruit-flavored liqueur, whipped cream, peanut butter, or marshmallow. The golem can spew forth one gallon of filling every three rounds until its supply (typically 1d6 +6 gallons of filling) is exhausted.

A golem's THACO is 10 for purposes of spraying filling and it can hit one victim. The golem's spray causes no damage (although golems filled with chunky peanut butter cause 1 hp damage) but blinds a victim for 1d4 rounds. There is no saving throw.

The lesser chocolate golems (1 HD), often called "party golems," are typically commissioned at great expense for children's parties by royalty. The party golems are capable of nothing more than walking, sitting, or standing. They never attack.

Party golems are always hollow and are filled with small trin-



kets and candies. Children make a game of whacking the golem with a stick or pole until it shatters, spilling its treasure and shards of chocolate for partygoers to scoop up.

Chocolate golems exhibit varied reactions to spell effects. Electricity affects them normally. *Hold*, *paralysis*, and *sleep* spells have no effect. Cold-based spells improve a chocolate golem's Armor Class by 2 (making them AC 8) for 1d4 rounds. Cumulative cold-based spells have no additional effect.

Any heat-based or fire spells function fully against a chocolate golem, but with a dangerous side effect. The blast of heat instantly causes a spray of hot melted chocolate in a 15' radius. Any creatures within this area suffer 1 hp damage per die of damage caused by the spell. Thus, a golem struck by a six-die fireball causes 6 hp damage to all creatures within 15'.

**Ecology:** Like all golems, the chocolate golem is a manufactured creature and has no place in nature. They are created only through magical means.

A priest of at least 11th level can create a chocolate golem through extensive ritual, preparation of the chocolate figure, and use of the following spells: *purify food & drink*, *prayer*, *commune*, and *animate object*.

A wizard of at least 14th level must cast *fabricate*, *geas*, and *limited wish* following the construction of the chocolate figure and extensive preparatory rituals.

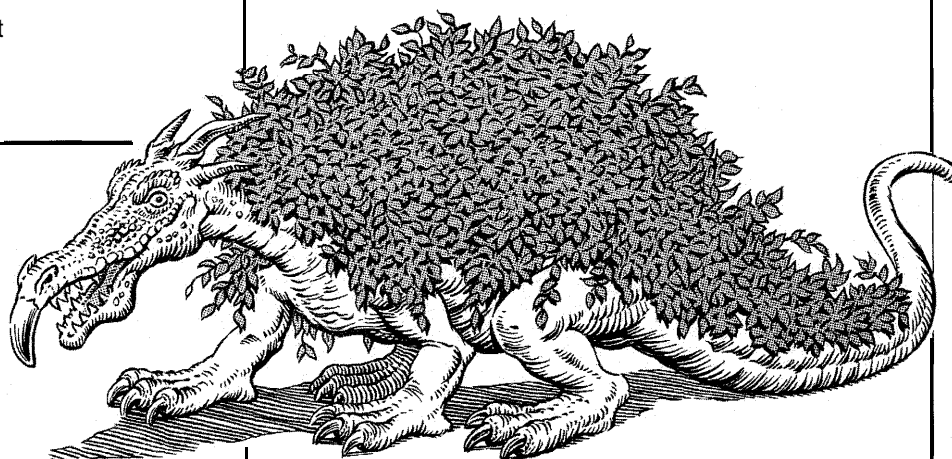
As part of their enchantment, chocolate golems are stable at temperatures up to 125°F. Enduring any temperature beyond that causes them to lose 1 hp per turn. When a golem loses 50% of its hit points from melting (whether magical or mundane), it is affected as if by a slow spell.

Anyone wishing to purchase a chocolate golem can expect to pay a minimum of 700 gp for a hollow golem, 1,000 gp for a solid golem, and 1,200 gp for a filled golem. The wizard's labor costs and additional 2,000–3,000 gp.



**CLIMATE/TERRAIN:** Any  
**FREQUENCY:** Rare  
**ORGANIZATION:** Solitary  
**ACTIVITY CYCLE:** Any  
**DIET:** Soil, water, compost  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Non- (0)  
**TREASURE:** Nil  
**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**NO. APPEARING:** 1  
**ARMOR CLASS:** 4  
**MOVEMENT:** 6  
**HIT DICE:** 8  
**THACO:** 13  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 2  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 2d4/2d4  
**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** Nil  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Nil  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** Nil  
**SIZE:** L (6'-8' tall)  
**MORALE:** Fearless (19)  
**XP VALUE:** 1,400



Chia golems span the full range from beautiful, elegant topiary creations to hideous, diseased, overgrown plantings. On royal estates, one might detect chia golems in the form of giant rabbits, mice, lions, camels, dragons, or even uniformed armed guards. Near an abandoned wizard's tower or in the courtyards of evil temples, chia golems may be present in the form of vampires, werebeasts, minotaurs, various giants, insects, or other horrid creatures.

A chia golem is a terra cotta or other baked stone sculpture that serves as a surface for plant growth. The chia golem is typically soaked in water and spread with seeds to await sprouting. They have a truly bizarre appearance until the plants have fully matured.

Chia golems may be planted with nearly any type of seeds, such as grass, resulting in a thick green coat; a creeping flowering plant such as phlox or alysium, resulting in a fluffy pastel mat; a poisonous plant such as poison ivy or oxalis; or a vine plant such as morning glory, ivy, or grape (vines may cause damage in melee; see *Combat*). A combination of plants may be used to achieve a particular aesthetic effect.

No one has ever been known to have created a chia golem for himself; all known examples have been received as gifts.

Chia golems typically range in size from 6'-8'. Smaller golems are somehow unable to maintain the enchantments.

The creation of a chia golem begins with a sculpture in the form of the desired creature. The sculpture requires at least 1,000 lbs. of material. The material must be porous when it is hard to allow for rooting and water seepage; thus, a golem could not be sculpted of granite, but it could be sculpted of limestone or of clay and then baked.

**Combat:** Chia golems act primarily as sentries. They may be stationed in a particular place to stand guard or they may be ordered to creep slowly around the perimeter of an estate to keep watch. Their lack of intelligence and capability for imperceptibly slow movement makes them ideal for this type of watch duty.

A chia golem attacks with both fists for 2d4 hp damage each. If the golem is planted with a vine whose tendrils might slap at an opponent, +1 hp is added to each fist strike. If the creator of the golem chose to plant it with a thorny or otherwise noxious plant, other bonuses may be assessed as well.

Chia golems are immune to *sleep*, *hold*, and *paralysis* spells. Cold-based and heat-based spells may wither the foliage of a chia golem but cause normal damage. Spells such as *entangle*, *warp wood*, and *plant growth* have no effect. *Hold plant* and *anti-plant shell* work on chia golems as per the spell descriptions. *Transmute rock to mud* destroys a chia golem, but the plants will live in the resulting mud as long as conditions are right.

**Habitat/Society:** Chia golems may be planted with perennial plants and kept outdoors year round or, if planted with more tender plants, may be moved indoors with the onset of cold weather. Chia golems may also live indoors year round.

The golems, which are hollow, must contain a small amount of soil at all times, and they must be watered according to the requirements of the particular plant. A quantity of compost must also be added to the golem about once per month.

**Ecology:** Like all golems, the chia golem is a manufactured creature and has no place in nature. They are created only through magical means.

A priest of at least 11th level can create a chia golem through extensive ritual, preparation of the terra cotta figure, and use of the following spells: *plant growth*, *prayer*, *commune*, and *animate object*.

A wizard of at least 14th level must cast *fabricate*, *geas*, *charm plants*, and *limited wish* following the construction of the baked clay figure and extensive preparatory rituals.

A druid of at least 14th level may create a chia golem using *animate rock* and *plant growth* and a month-long process of fertility and other rituals that must culminate on the eve of the winter solstice.

# Plush Golem

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Non- (0)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d2/1d2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Surprise
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (6' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	650

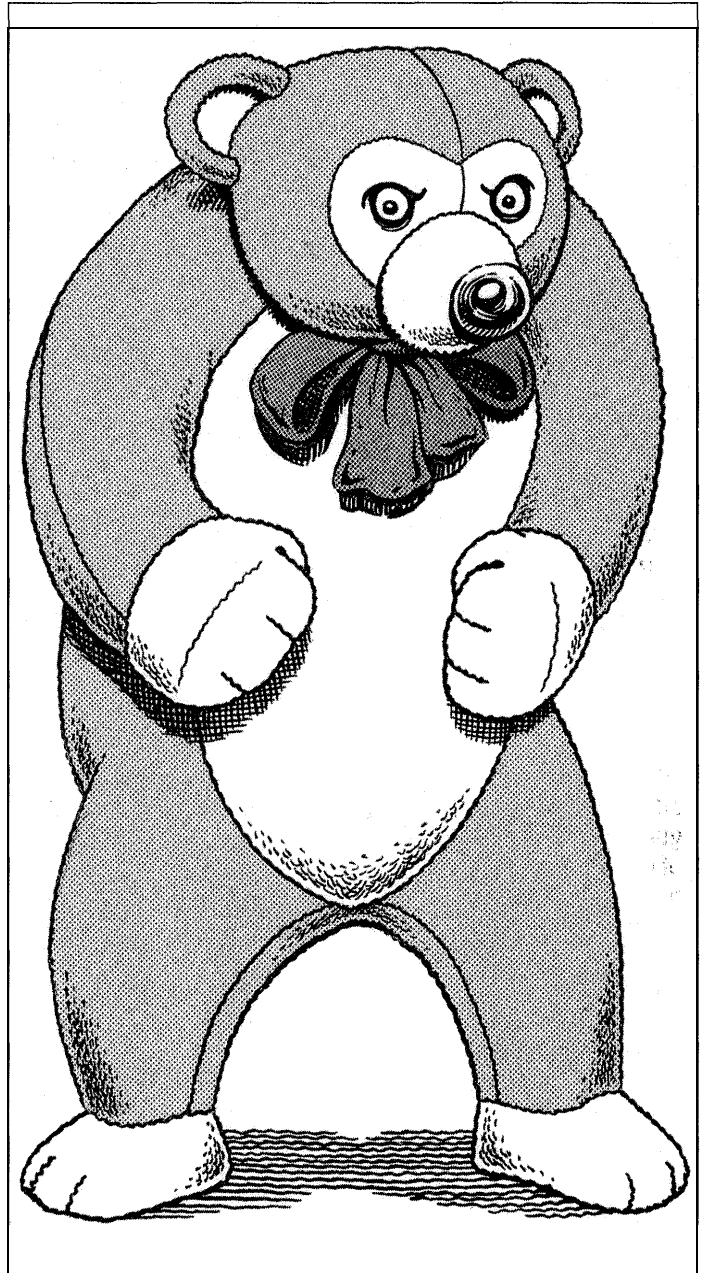
Plush golems are every parents nightmare. They are typically given as gifts to young children, usually by obnoxious aunts or uncles. Plush golems seem like ordinary stuffed animals at first, but eventually reveal their animated state of being to the children who own them. As the children treat their toy animals more and more like live creatures, the parents' frustration increases as the child insists that the toy be allowed to eat at the dinner table, go along on outings, and take part in other family activities to the nuisance of everyone.

Plush golems are finely crafted stuffed animals and may be made of velvet, cotton, or wool. They are usually stuffed with cotton batting, but are sometimes partly filled with dried beans. They may be created in realistic colors to represent a real bear, panda, lion, or tiger, or they may be fabricated into fantastic creatures such as pink elephants, purple rabbits, or lime green monkeys.

Of particular note are plush golems in the form of a large purple-and-green dinosaur. For some unknown reason, these have been seen in great numbers in recent years, and have an affect of aversion and fear in individuals over 12 years of age. Upon viewing such a creature, persons over 12 must roll a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be struck dumb for 2 rounds.

Also of note are plush golems in the form of a small striped tiger. These are far more rare than the purple dinosaurs. Children who receive the tigers as gifts suddenly seem to find themselves in more trouble with their parents than normal, find that no amount of cleaning will keep their bedrooms neat, and that they have trouble concentrating on schoolwork.

**Combat:** Plush golems never attack individuals under 16 years of age. They attack only when provoked or when the children of the household are threatened. They gain the element of surprise, since most adults never suspect the possibility of the creature's animation. Although they are weak in combat, they often provide enough distraction for a child to escape a dangerous situation.



These creatures are immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *paralysis*, and cold-based spells. They are immune to heat-based spells but suffer normal damage from fire-based spells. Plush golems suffer only half damage from bludgeoning weapons. They instinctively react to the commands of the children who receive them as gifts.

**Ecology:** Like all golems, the plush golem is a manufactured creature and has no place in nature. They are created only through magical means.

A priest of at least 11th level can create a plush golem through extensive ritual, preparation of the stuffed figure, and use of the following spells: *prayer*, *commune*, and *animate object*.

A wizard of at least 14th level must cast *fabricate*, *geas*, and *limited wish* following the construction of the stuffed figure and extensive preparatory rituals.

# BEAVHOLDER

*Tiny Fey, Lawful Good*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 13 (3d4 + 6)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** STR +3, CON +4

**Skills** [Perception](#) +2, [Stealth](#) +2

**Damage Resistances** Cold

**Condition Immunities** [Prone](#)

**Senses** Passive Perception 12

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The beavholder has advantage on Wisdom ([Perception](#)) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Polite.** As a bonus action, the beavholder can move up to half its speed away from a hostile creature that it can see, apologizing as it does so. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

**Busy.** The beavholder can construct simple lodges of mud and timber, provided the materials are available. Building a beavholder lodge takes 1d4 hours per 10 ft. radius enclosure, which may be interconnected to form a larger lodge network. Creatures inside the lodge enjoy the benefit of full cover and immunity to cold damage. This ability may also be used to construct a dam equivalent to four connected 5-foot- by-5-foot panels that are 6 inches thick.

**Familiar.** The beavholder can serve another creature as a familiar, forming a telepathic bond with its willing master.

While the two are bonded, the master can sense what the beavholder senses as long as they are within 1 mile of each other. If its master causes it physical harm, the beavholder will end its service as a familiar, breaking the telepathic bond.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The beavholder makes two attacks: two with its bite or two with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

**Timbit® Rays.** The beavholder shoots two of the following magical Timbit® rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one or two targets it can see within 60 feet of it:

1. *Maple Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be [charmed](#) until the start of the beavholder's next turn. While the target is [charmed](#) in this way, its speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls.

2. *Chocolate Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be [frightened](#) until the start of the beavholder's next turn.

3. *Strawberry-Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be [stunned](#) until the start of the beavholder's next turn.

4. *Hoser, 'eh.* If the target is a creature that is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be moved up to 30 feet directly away from the beavholder.

If the target is an object weighing 10 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, the beavholder moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. The beavholder can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a container.

## Description

A beavholder is a tiny fey creature reminiscent of a beholder. It resembles a cross between a beholder and an ordinary beaver, but its body is only 8 inches wide, and it has orbiting Timbits® instead of eyestalks. It busies itself creating dams and lodges of mud and timber, rarely tiring due to its ever-present cup of Tim Hortons® coffee.

A beavholder can't speak any languages but can approximate mimicking certain words and phrases like 'Sorry, eh?' and 'Hoser!'

**Loyal Pet.** Beavholders are loyal pets, but are particularly eager to serve someone who is wearing plaid-patterned fabric. A beavholder can serve as a familiar if politely asked.



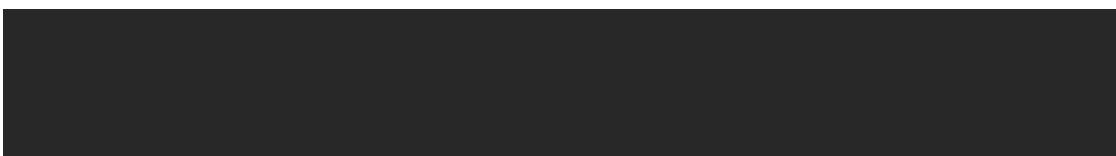


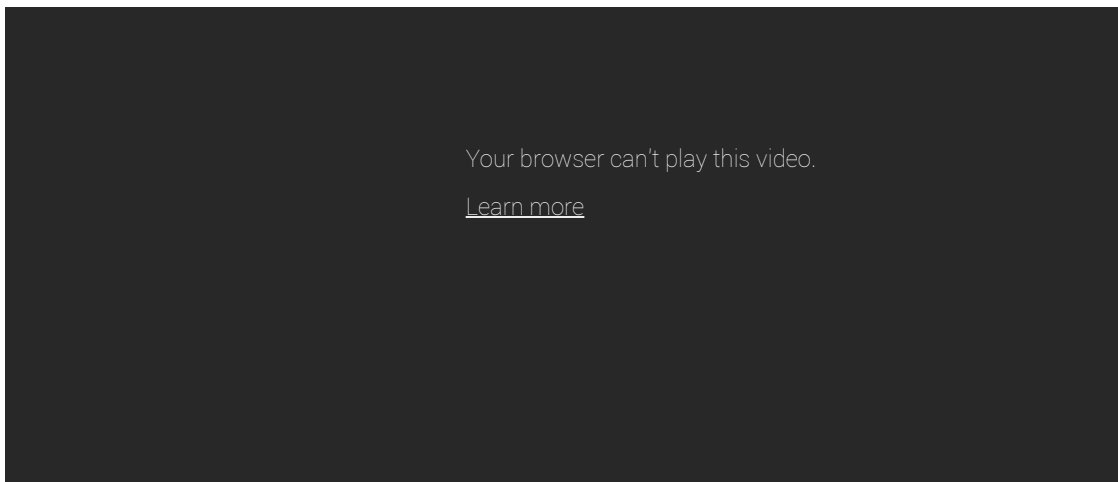
## Terror of Undermountain

Adobe asked artists to create a creature from the very depths of their worst nightmares using D&D monster parts. Roll a Con saving throw and check out the incredible results below!

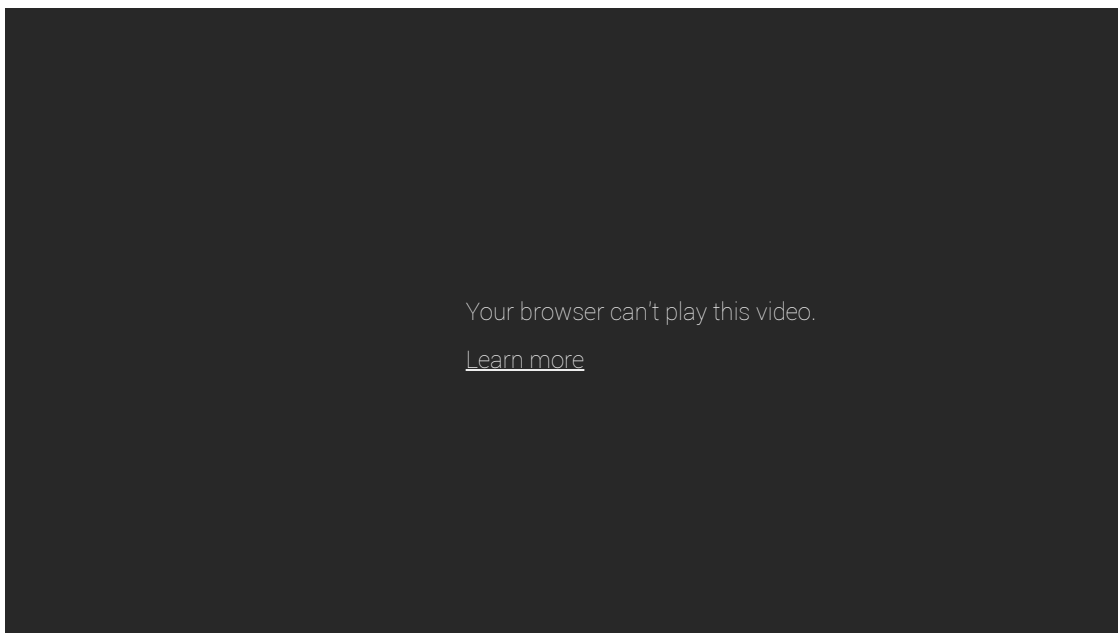
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**“B**orn from a regretted communion of the Mad Mage and a dreaded hellbeast whose name none dare pronounce, Halaster’s greatest mistake stalks her father’s halls, proudly wearing the scars endured from centuries of banishment and the magical deformities she wrought upon herself to survive. Torturing and killing those who dare venture beyond Undermountain’s measured paths, she seeks to gain her father’s approval—one which he bitterly withheld—by becoming worthy of the name, the Terror of Undermountain!”





That’s the description artists were given to create a new monster for Dungeons & Dragons using the powers of Adobe Photoshop, as they sought to **summon the Terror of Undermountain**. Entrants were able to download a toolkit containing various monster parts from the contest’s website and then follow a step-by-step tutorial on how to assemble a monster using **Adobe Photoshop CC software**. After much deliberation the judges chose Will Kalkanis-Ellis’s work based on its perfect mix of originality, creativity, and sheer artistry.



Not only did he scoop the \$5,000 grand prize, Kalkanis-Ellis also got to visit the Wizards of the Coast offices in Seattle (even bumping into author R.A. Salvatore who happened to be in the building at the time!) and witness his monster being turned into a D&D miniature.

“I have been creating art as long as I can remember,” Kalkanis-Ellis tells *Dragon+*. “I spent most of my childhood redrawing frames from

my favorite comic books, drawing dragons, or designing my own superheroes.”

Kalkanis-Ellis ran through a number of ideas in his head before he started. A little more research on the creature helped bring his winning monster to life.

“I knew that it was the spawn of the Mad Mage and a hellbeast, but I also found out that it had been held in confinement out of sight, lived underground and had the scars from years of abuse visible on its body. My first thought was to make something that was both humanoid like the Mad Mage, but also a monster, , so I decided a bipedal creature with two arms would be the best body type.



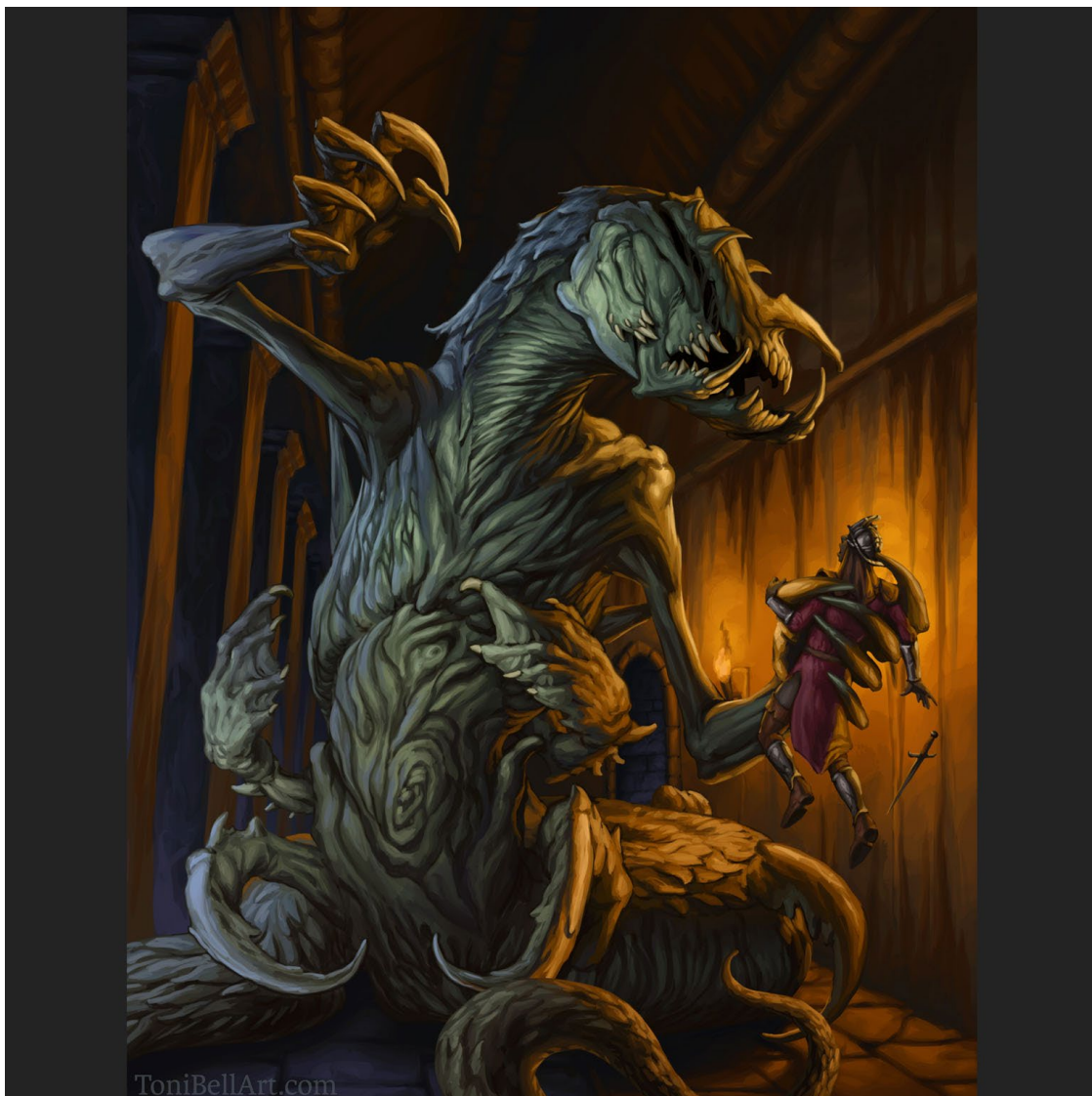
Winner, Will Kalkanis-Ellis

“I wanted to make it pale because it lived underground and because I figured that would also help to show off the scars. I also wanted it to have its restraints still attached, to show that it had been confined. I think the thing I went back and forth on the most was whether or not to give it hair. I tried both painting it in and composting in photos of hair numerous times and just couldn’t get it to look right.”

Kalkanis-Ellis first used Photoshop in his junior year at college when he transferred into the digital media department. His initial step in this challenge was to sketch ideas in Photoshop and lay out the composition and the shape of the creature. He starting with black-and-white positive-and-negative shapes, and then gradually refined those.

## Honorable Mentions





Toni B

“These are almost always the first steps I take. They allow me to completely visualize what I have in my head so I can see any flaws in my composition and work out those flaws. It helps me come up with not just a design, but an overall image and composition that is appealing.

“I downloaded the toolkit containing various body parts from the contest’s website and it was useful to see elements of other D&D monsters. It helped guide my thinking as to where I wanted to take my design, and also what I wanted to avoid.”

With the creature sketched out, Kalkanis-Ellis used his skills with Adobe Photoshop to finesse the monster.

“I used a whole bunch of different things to make my sketch come to

life, so the main thing was to get all these parts to work together. The first thing I did when bringing in a photo, part of a render, or texture was throw a bunch of filters on it—such as color balance, levels, and smart blur—to make sure that it had the right light color, that the values were correct, or that the quality of the source material looked the same. I would also use the Liquify and Warp tools to morph these images into place and to make sure I didn't lose my original composition. Once everything was in place, I used gradients on layers to knock out the highlights and then used masks on those layers to paint back in the light only in the areas I wanted it, so that I could control the lighting better.

“I also used the Pattern Stamp tool and a number of textures to make the materials pop. For finalization, I used the Camera Raw filter, along with levels adjustment layers, color balance adjustment layers, and a bunch of other filter layers. And of course I used the standard brush tool and mixer brush tools to repaint where I needed to.”

As well as scooping the \$5,000 grand prize, Kalkanis-Ellis also gets to see his winning monster made into a real-life D&D miniature.

“I think that's pretty awesome. I love figurines and miniatures so I'm really looking forward to having something that I helped design in my house,” he says. “I'm not sure exactly yet what I want to do with the money and I'd love to say it would be something really cool and exciting like taking a trip somewhere, but most likely I will spend some of it on a new graphics card, some on online courses, and maybe pay some bills.”

**Find out more about the Terror of Undermountain on [Adobe's official blog](#) and see more of Will Kalkanis-Ellis' artwork on [Instagram](#) .**

---

BACK TO TOP

# The Best of the DMs Guild

DMs Guild Adept Shawn Merwin takes to the high seas, looking at nautical content for your D&D game. Hoist your mainsail and batten down the hatches as you head out on the briny!

Shawn Merwin



---

## Creator Q&A

Phil Beckwith of P.B. Publishing has been creating content on the Dungeon Masters Guild since it first began. He has turned a passion for Dungeons & Dragons that started with a pre-created



Dragonlance character and used it to craft adventures for other players, whether as a solo designer or as part of a team. Dragon+ asked him about his ocean-going experiences and what the DMs Guild means to him.



Phil Beckwith

When did you first start playing Dungeons & Dragons and what keeps you coming back to the tabletop?

My first exposure to D&D was back at the turn of the century in the twilight days of second edition, just before third edition was released. I was 18 years old and fresh out of high school when I went to my friend's house with a whole bunch of spare time up my sleeve.

He whipped out the second edition *Player's Handbook* and handed me a pre-made character card with the name "Raistlin" on it and a logo that read "Dragonlance". That session included about four hours of exploration through Solace, Abanasinia, and saw me enter the ruined city of Xak Tsaroth. While it was my only taste of actual D&D play for nearly fourteen years thereafter, it kickstarted my love for *Dragonlance* and the world of Krynn. I spent those next fourteen years reading and immersing myself in the epic tales of amazing authors such as Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, Richard A. Knaak, Don Perrin, Jean Rabe, and more before I heard about a new edition of D&D being released. In late 2014 I decided to invest in the fifth edition *Starter Set*, and the rest is history.

I keep playing because I am a storyteller at heart, and always have been. I immediately and naturally gravitate toward being a DM. From that first session way back in 2000 I was hooked into these worlds of wizards, heroes, gods, romance, war, and glory.

**Do you have a favorite among the many game design projects you have worked on?**

There are so many now. The *Monsters of the Guild* hardcover book

stands out as I was part of the core project team. It brought together more than forty amazing game designers and delivered a monster manual with over 100 new monsters. It was then released as a hardcover book, one of the first on the DMs Guild. We also released a smaller version of the book that donates all the creator proceeds to charity, called *Monsters Without Borders*, which I am very proud of.

Currently I am deep into the creation of a D&D adaptation of the *Rex Draconis* books by *New York Times* bestselling author Richard A. Knaak. This is a collaboration with Richard, who is known for the *Dragonlance* and *Dragonrealm* series and has written novels for *World of Warcraft* and *Diablo*, as well as my super-talented fellow DMs Guild creator Micah Watt.

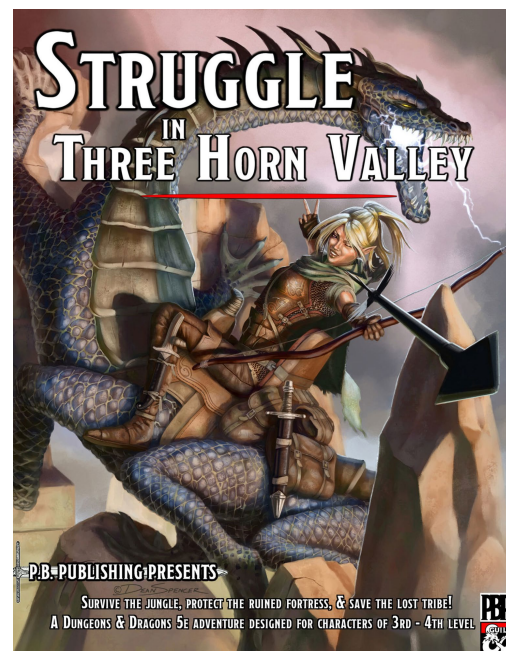
But I wouldn't still be here creating if it were not for the success of my spooky, horror-themed adventure *The Haunt*, so that holds a special place in my heart.

*Your adventure **Struggle in Three Horn Valley** begins with some nautical shenanigans. What were some of the challenges in creating water-themed encounters?*

First, it needed to have the right theatrical feel to give a proper sense of sailing the high seas. I was able to draw back on my time in the Royal Australian Navy, where I spent weeks upon weeks at sea. I included lots of simple things, like the sounds heard from the upper decks when you're below deck, the smell of the ocean spray when the waves crash against the hull, the nautical terminologies, and the visual effects like watching a mast peek over the horizon and slowly rise into view on the open sea.

To give them a sense of meaningful choice the adventure also had to allow the characters to assist in the attempt to outrun the approaching pirates. This was achieved in split visual scenes as the pirates gained ever closer using their faster ship, as a storm takes shape ahead. Including the environmental effects of being in the ocean—such as the swell, the

weather and the harsh conditions —is always a great idea in nautical-themed adventures, especially when those things mean mechanical and skill challenges for the player characters.



Struggle in Three Horn Valley. (Select to view)

Finally, the scene has a pirate boarding attack, although this sees a whole pirate crew fighting the entire complement of the characters' ship. Mass combat scenes can sometimes take the players out of the action if all the NPCs must also act. To overcome this, the adventure suggests taking a narrative approach to describe the larger battle alongside the immediate combat of the player characters. To make sure the combat doesn't lose its power by descending into turn-by-turn actions and to keep that feel of fighting at sea in a storm, the adventure also afflicts characters without the sailor background or proficiency in Acrobatics with disadvantage for attack rolls and ability checks as the ship pitches up and down. Keeping the nautical theme solidly in place throughout play, be it via narrative descriptions or game mechanics, is vital.

### What has the DMs Guild meant to you?

When I started writing and creating published content for D&D I had so many story ideas that I couldn't keep them locked away in my brain any longer. I decided to see what avenue might exist on the internet to share these wild adventures of high seas, creepy haunted mansions, and dinosaur-riding pirates with the larger community. A quick Google search was all that I needed, and within seconds I had found the Dungeon Masters Guild.



This soon led to me releasing my first adventure entitled *Something Smells Fishy*. It was terrible, but I didn't care. It was mine, my own, my precious!

From there it was a snowball effect and I produced content at a fast rate, and I have so much to be thankful for because of the opportunity the DMs Guild provided. It has helped me through times of serious financial difficulty, when it was often the only source of money that kept the lights on at home, food on my kid's plates, and a smile on their faces. I have met so many wonderful people through this community who I now consider dear friends as well as mentors, partners, peers, and genuine everyday heroes.

I am very proud to be a DMs Guild creator, and very thankful that the opportunity exists. It is fair to say that the ability to earn, publish, and collaborate with the creator community via the DMs Guild means a great deal to me.

The *Dino-Wars Duology*, which includes *Struggle in Three Horn Valley* and adds a second adventure, *Dinos of Darkness* (written with Ashley Warren), costs \$5.45 on the DMs Guild. As an added bonus to our readers, we're pleased to offer *Struggle in Three Horn Valley* as a special download for the life of this issue. We hope you enjoy!

[DOWNLOAD 'STRUGGLE IN THREE HORN VALLEY'](#)

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## Design Thought: Challenging Combat Environments

Setting encounters, particularly combat encounters, in challenging settings can create fun and memorable experiences for players. Part of the enjoyment can come from the narrative aspect, where expertly crafted terrain or dramatically expressed scenes evoke heart-pounding action and danger. Expressing that setting mechanically, in game terms, can be equally fun and challenging, but it is not without its dangers.

As Phil Beckwith described above, using advantage or disadvantage is an elegant and simple way to express a challenging setting.

Characters with appropriate skills or backgrounds can escape the negative effects of the setting, while others might be able to use actions to overcome the effects, either temporarily or permanently, such as lashing themselves to the mast to avoid falling over on a pitching deck.

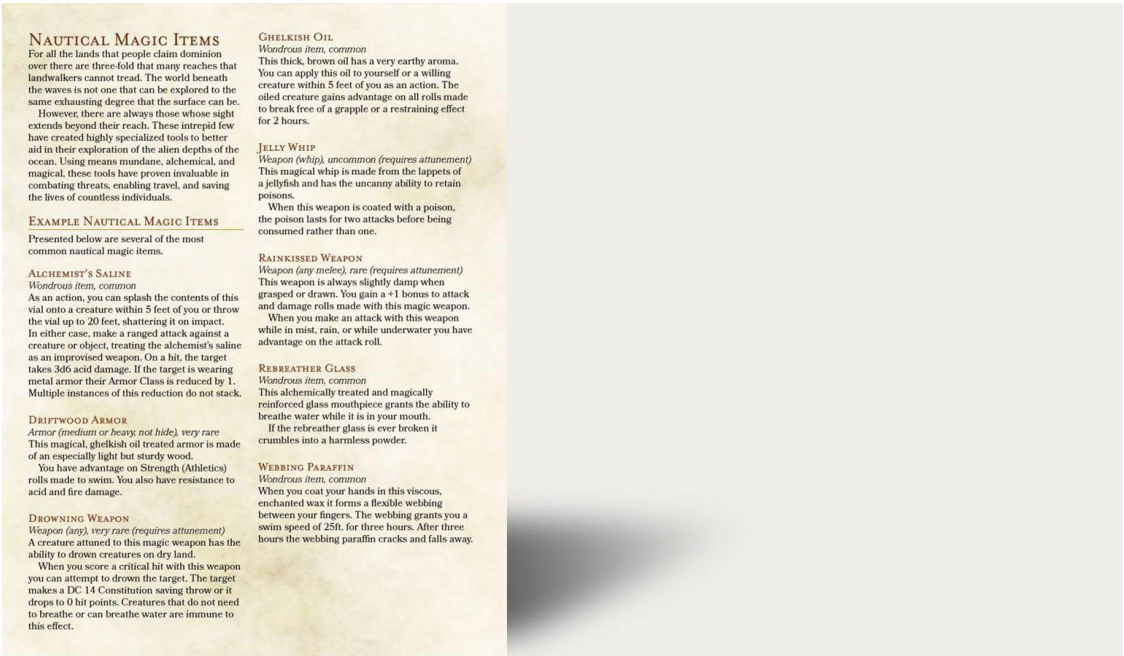
What you want to avoid in your adventures is slowing down a game too much with overly complicated mechanical effects. Making one check at the start of each turn to see if you keep your feet is generally fine, but for some people even that one check, having to be made every round by every participant, slows play down. So it's important to avoid a scenario where a player might be forced to make several ability checks or saving throws in a single turn just to deal with the effects.

Another way to deal with effects is to turn them into another exciting element, such as creatures or traps. For example, a storm-tossed ship might hit all creatures with an 'attack' that requires a Strength saving throw to avoid taking bludgeoning damage and falling prone. On the next round, the 'attack' might be a swinging boom or rolling barrel that threatens a single character. This brings the setting alive while still keeping it manageable.

---

## A Trove of Nautical Tools

Other than the setting itself, one of the most rewarding aspects of nautical campaigns are the tools and magical trinkets that go along with a significant ocean voyage. There is no paucity of content on the DMs Guild detailing imaginative and helpful goods!



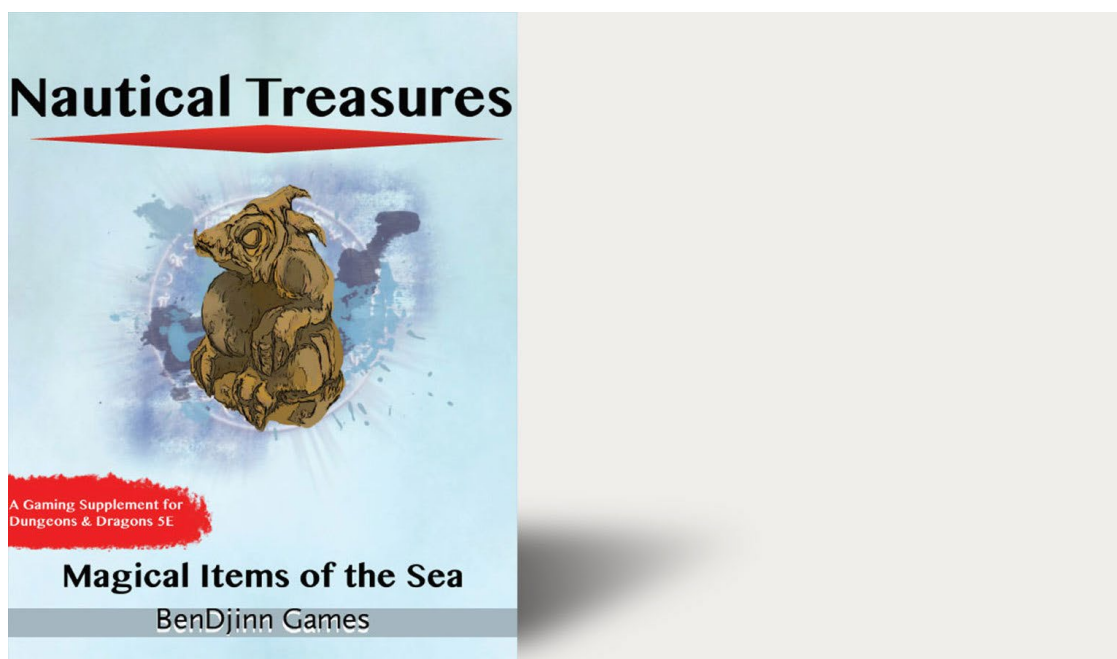
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**Nautical Magic Items**  
**by Kyle Carty**  
**Price: Pay What You Want (\$0.50 Suggested Price)**

This one-page offering contains eight interesting items, ranging from the common to the very rare. Our favorites are the simple, common items, such as the waxy *webbing paraffin* that increases swim speeds or the thick, brown *ghelkish oil*, which could prove useful against those dreaded tentacle attacks from giant sea squids or octopi.

**MORE INFO**





(Select to view)

## **Nautical Treasures – Magical Items of the Sea**

**by J. Benjamin/BenDjinn Games**

**Price: \$0.75**

*Nautical Treasures* details 25 magic items for sea-bound campaigns in a nicely formatted presentation sprinkled with art. A wide array of items is presented, from protective devices such as the *talisman against sirens* to weapons like the *whirlwind cutlass*. Other neat aspects include a characteristics table for magic items that takes into account the ocean's effect on their creation.

**MORE INFO**

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(Select to view)

## **Nautical Trinkets**

**by J. Benjamin/BenDjinn Games**

**Price: \$0.50**

If J. Benjamin's 25 magic items are good, then his 100 nautical trinkets are great! This simple but highly imaginative table offers up the kind of trinket table found in the *Player's Handbook*, with a nautical theme. Our d100 roll on this sea-based list of trinkets provided a vial of purple eye-liner made of crushed coral!

**MORE INFO**

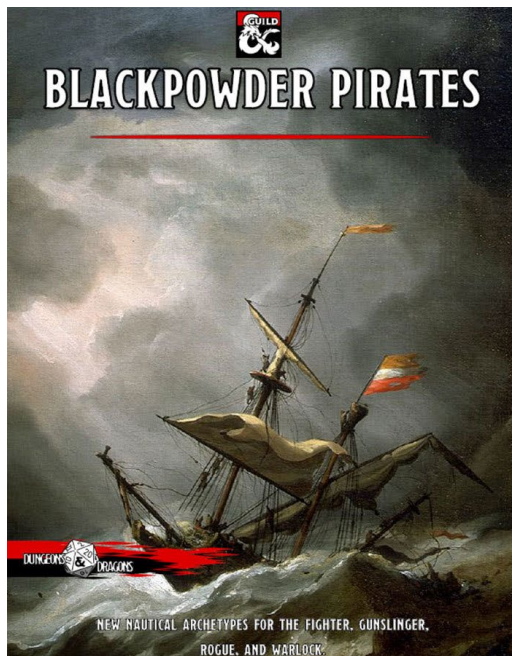
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## Design Thought: Survival on the High Seas

One key aspect of a nautical campaign is simple survival. Potable water and unspoiled food are elements of a long sea voyage that can be forgotten in the current age of supersonic travel. Dehydration and starvation may not be the elements you want to structure a whole campaign around but highlighting these dangers in an adventure can really drive the point home, as the characters might need to use valuable time, skill, and magical resources to simply keep themselves and the crew alive when something goes wrong with the provisions.

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## Other Products



(Select to view)

### **Blackpowder Pirates**

**by David Adams**

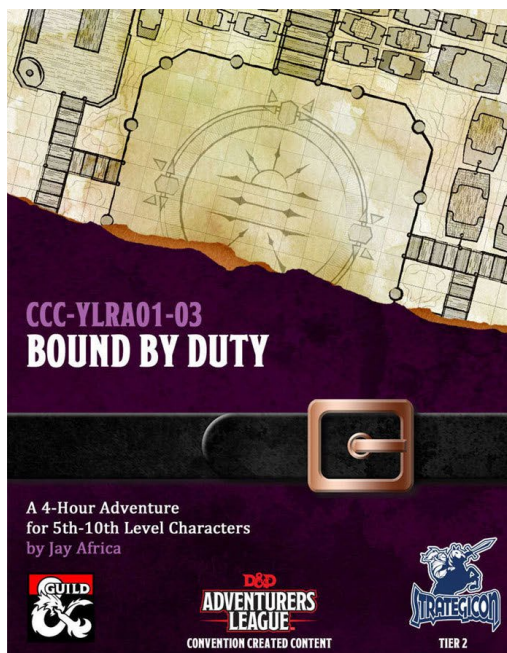
**Price: Pay What You Want (\$1.00 Suggested Price)**

If you like your nautical-based products on the crunchy side, *Blackpowder Pirates* is for you. Its class options include the buccaneer martial archetype, the mariner fighting style, the freebooter roguish archetype, the warlock's pact of the compass, and much more. Players willing to drop anchor in a sea of homebrew content will find a vast treasure trove here.

**MORE INFO**

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(Select to view)

**Bound by Duty**  
by Jay Africa  
Price: \$4.99

Jay Africa is one of the D&D Adventurers League's most talented and creative contributors, and his 68-page adventure *Bound by Duty* confirms that. Beyond the wonderful cartography and the pleasing layout, this well-designed adventure shows an excellent attention to detail and its nautical encounters are evocative of life on the seas.

**MORE INFO**

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Game designer and editor Shawn Merwin's professional work on Dungeons & Dragons has ranged from third to fifth edition, showing up in sourcebooks, adventures, articles, and Organized Play administration. He recently contributed to the **Moonshae Isles Regional Guide**, a great place to set your nautical adventures.

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# STRUGGLE IN THREE HORN VALLEY

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P.B. PUBLISHING PRESENTS

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SURVIVE THE JUNGLE, PROTECT THE RUINED FORTRESS, & SAVE THE LOST TRIBE!  
A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 5E ADVENTURE DESIGNED FOR CHARACTERS OF 3RD - 4TH LEVEL





# STRUGGLE IN THREE HORN VALLEY

## Credits

**Author:** Phil Beckwith (P.B. Publishing)

**Editor:** Ken Carcas & Jeff Stephens

**Cover Artist:** Dean Spencer

**Interior Illustrators:** Jacob E. Blackmon, Steve Young, & Bradley K McDevitt

**Battle Map Cartographer:** Chris Bissette (Loot the Room)

**Wilderness Map Cartographer:** Derek Von Zarovich (Elven Tower)

### Special Thanks to:

Harrison O'Sullivan, Chris Bissette & Benoit de Bernardy

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

Struggle in Three Horn Valley is designed to be completed in about 6 hours of play.

It has been calculated to present a challenging yet fulfilling experience for four characters of 3rd level. Whilst being optimized for an average party level (APL) of 3rd level, it will also provide a less challenging yet still enjoyable experience for an APL of 4th level.

This adventure is a location based adventure. The map in **Appendix B** will help you, the Dungeon Master, to drive the scenes as our heroes explore different locations accessible to them around the western parts of the Island of Selu.

### TIME PASSING

Use the below table to track relative **Time of Day (TOD)**; this will assist you with ruling the survival/exhaustion rules above.

As each group completes a given amount of encounters (see **Total Encounters Completed** within this section) and depending on if they have had a long rest or not, describe the time of day to that particular group as per the table below.

This may vary depending on the different group decisions, and should only be used as a guide. Feel free to change this as you see fit.

Total Encounters Completed	TOD (No Long Rest)	TOD (With Long Rest)
2	Afternoon	Midnight
4	Twilight	Predawn
6	Evening	Dawn
7	Midnight	Mid-Morning
8	Predawn	Noon
9	Dawn	Afternoon
10	Mid-Morning	Twilight
11	Noon	Evening

**Note:** Remember to check the PCs for Exhaustion as soon as the time reaches, or moves beyond, the Evening hours in the table above.

## SURVIVAL

**Unforgiving Wilderness.** The Island of Selu, where this adventure is set, is an unforgiving land. Survival in the wilderness is tough, and it is vital that the PCs keep themselves nourished if they are to survive the multitude of dangers that the island presents. If the heroes do not eat food and drink some water at least once per day, they will gain 1 level of **Exhaustion (PHB, pg. 291)** each evening of the food-less/drink-less day.

## ENCOUNTER PACING

**Party Split.** At the beginning of this adventure there is an option to split the party intentionally. This is due to the heroes being shipwrecked and sees our heroes wash ashore in two different locations. It is heavily advised that if you choose this option that you rotate between groups on conclusion of each encounter. For instance, once Group 1 has completed the **1A Northern Beach Awakening** encounter and they begin to move on to another area, pause their scene and begin the Group 2 starting encounter **1B Southern Beach Awakening**, or wherever seems like an organic time to switch for your story flow. Then on completion, move back to Group 1 and so forth.

**Time Passing.** Please refer to the **Time Passing** table to estimate what time of day it is at any given moment and describe accordingly.

## CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

This adventure is designed to utilize the Milestone leveling system, by which it is expected that the characters start at level 3 or 4 at the beginning of the adventure. Upon defeating Dorrn and securing **Nula Ruin (Area 17)**, the heroes should advance by one level automatically.

This adventure runs fine with Experience Points based leveling, and you are encouraged to use XP if it is a better fit for you and your playing group.



## BOXED TEXT

This adventure includes boxed text to assist those Dungeon Masters who like to have a description of a scene or location. The use of boxed text is by no means required; many great Dungeon Masters avoid the use of boxed text and instead feel more comfortable describing the action in their own words. You should consider what works best for you and your group. If you choose not to read aloud any of the text provided, you should at least paraphrase the information to keep the players aware of their environment.

## SETTING & LOCATION

***Struggle in Three Horn Valley*** is primarily designed to be used in the Forgotten Realms setting. However, with some tweaks in the lore of the island, a savvy Dungeon Master can drop and play this adventure into any campaign.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the unclaimed waters far off the Sword Coast, pirates dare to board, loot and kill unsuspecting ships and their crews. The notorious pirate ship, *The Black Spectre*, captained by the infamous pirate Captain Korugk Gold-Tusk, has recently embarked on a journey in search for not only their next big haul of booty, but a new home base of operations. Little does Captain Gold-Tusk know, he and his crew may receive more than they bargained for.

***The Lost Island of Selu (Appendix B and C)***, hidden deep in a magical fog, is in the uncharted waters far from sight and far off the coast of Chult. Here, the view on the stars are muddled in the sky, and the world's magnetic poles seem to change direction at a moment's notice making navigation impossible. The island is inhabited by dinosaurs, lizardfolk, jungle creatures and three human tribes. The Paku tribe, located on the western side, have lived in peace for as long as the eldest elder can remember. Their two warring cousin tribes fight between themselves for territory and honor on the eastern side of the island. They pay no heed to the Paku. That is about to change, for when Captain Gold-tusk and his scurvy lieutenant, ***Dorr n (Appendix A)***, step ashore and unite the eastern tribes, the Paku's peaceful way of life will be changed forever.

The Paku's only hope lies with a small group of

heroes who have washed ashore. It will be their task to help protect the good people of the Paku tribe, though first they must survive the wilds on the Island of Selu!

## HOOK SUGGESTIONS

This adventure does not have any setting specific adventure hooks though the following are provided as suggestions to hook your players and campaign into this adventure. However you decide to hook this adventure into your campaign, ensure that the heroes are accompanied by the beautiful young elven woman named ***'Raven' (Appendix A)***, as she becomes a vital NPC within this adventure:

- An elven nobleman at the local tavern is looking for adventurers to escort and protect his estranged daughter, named ***'Raven'***. She is to be placed in the care of relatives who live in a distant coastal city. Passage will be bought aboard a cargo ship, for his daughter and the PCs, to travel down/up the coastline to the destination.
- The local Town Guard Captain has offered the heroes a handsome reward for escorting a dangerous prisoner to a maximum security prison via way of a cargo vessel up/down the coast. She is an elven ranger that goes by the name of ***'Raven'***. The prison is built into the side of a giant shard of rock soaring up from sub-aquatic depths located in the middle of a vast ocean.
- The heroes need passage to another city along the coast, and travel by sea is the fastest route. They find positions available on board a cargo ship, offering free travel for working deckhands whilst at sea. A beautiful female elven ranger, who goes by the name of ***'Raven'***, is also hired along side the heroes to embark on the journey.
- The heroes are hired by a wealthy historian to investigate rumours of the infamous and lost pirate shipwreck of ***'Bone-Beard's Galley'*** which is said to hold immense treasure and magical items. He provides coordinates and the name of a cargo vessel traveling in the same direction. He also sends along his apprentice, an elven archaeologist, her name is ***'Raven'***.



## CHAPTER 2: SHIPWRECKED!

This chapter kicks off our adventure with the heroes having taken passage to sea embarked on a *Cargo Sailing Ship (DMG, pg. 119)* named *'The Lady Luck'*. The young elven woman, **Raven**, who is accompanying them is terribly sea-sick and their destination is some days off. The ship has been forced to navigate off course, slightly further out to sea, in an attempt to evade a large storm spotted on the horizon. Little do the heroes, Raven, and the crew know, this action has set off a series of events that will lead them on an epic adventure through the lost Island of Selu.

### PIRATES'ARRR'US

As the heroes wake in the morning of the second day at sea, read or paraphrase the following, and edit where required to fit your specific hook:

As you wake in the chill early morning, the rocking of the cargo vessel, named 'The Lady Luck', reminds you of the horrible ten-day at sea that is yet to come. Gulls squawk from the open ocean skies, and heavy boots stamp over the upper-decks above your bunk.

There seems to be a commotion among the crew members, as you sit up from the straw stuffed mattress that you had spent the past night slumbering in. You see your fellow companions mirror your actions, as you look to each other for any explanation to the raised voices and alarmed shouts above. Raven, the elven woman accompanying you, is fast asleep, having spent the night retching up her stomach from sea-sickness.

Allow the players time to discuss between themselves what their next actions are and what they might want to do before moving above deck. If they decide to awaken Raven, she will refuse to move, being still very ill, and roll back over to sleep.

The compartment that the heroes share is actually a storeroom; bags of flour, rice and

spices are stacked in the spaces between the makeshift bedding. The floors, walls and ceiling are all wooden planks. Two opposing walls of the compartment are actually the hull of the ship, and crashing water can be heard rushing along side it. A staircase leads up to a hatch that opens onto the bow (front deck) of the ship.

### 1. UPPER-DECKS

When the heroes decide to leave the storeroom, read or paraphrase the following:

As you open the inclined hatch; salty sea spray splashes your face and the ship's bow comes to life before you. The crew are rushing to and fro, some readying themselves with small weapons such as knives and various clubs, whilst others are looking out to sea to the south from the direction in which the vessel had first embarked from.

A lookout from high up on the ship's main mast calls out bearings to the crew below, and has his arm fixated constantly to the south. As dark clouds begin to fill the skies, the crew seem to be searching for something in the distance.

A **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** will allow a hero to hear past the gusting wind, and hear what the lookout is calling back to the crew:

- **"Pirates now closing; bearing one hundred and seventy five degrees, due south!"** and
- **"They have a Galley-ship! We can't outrun them! Prepare to receive their boarding, captain!"**

If the heroes look to the south, a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** will see the single mast of the pirate's ship emerging from the horizon, a black flag streaming from its crow's nest in the wind.



## THE PIRATES

The 60 pirates aboard the “*The Black Spectre*” (*Galley Ship, DMG, pg. 119*), are lead by the notorious orc pirate; **Captain Korugk Gold-Tusk** (see *Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*). These are his waters, and his crew noticed the cargo vessel steering off-course and into his territory. Never a pirate to shy away from an opportunity to plunder more booty, Captain Gold-Tusk commanded his salty crew to chase down the cargo ship, board her, take control, kill her crew and plunder her cargo.

## CLOSING DISTANCE

*The Black Spectre* is currently 2 miles away from *The Lady Luck*, and is closing at a speed of 2 mph. It will take 1 hour of open water chase for *The Black Spectre* to be close enough to board their victims. This is assuming that *The Lady Luck* is traveling at top speed away from the pirate vessel.

**Note:** Should *The Lady Luck* decide to approach and meet the pirates halfway; it will take only 20 minutes for the two ships to meet.

## SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

- **North:** A misty haze stunts visibility to a distance of 3 miles.
- **South:** The pirate ship continues to close.
- **East:** The storm approaches, lightning crashes, and thunder booms in the distance.
- **West:** A misty haze stunts visibility to a distance of 3 miles.

**Note:** The captain of the *The Lady Luck*, Captain Rodney De'Bargo, will want to try to buy as much preparation time for his crew members as possible, and head north at top speed (2 mph), though a successful **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion/Intimidation) check** will change his mind. Regardless of which direction the heroes choose to have the ship go, the pirates will catch up to them before reaching any other destination (see *Pirate Boarding encounter, Area 2*)

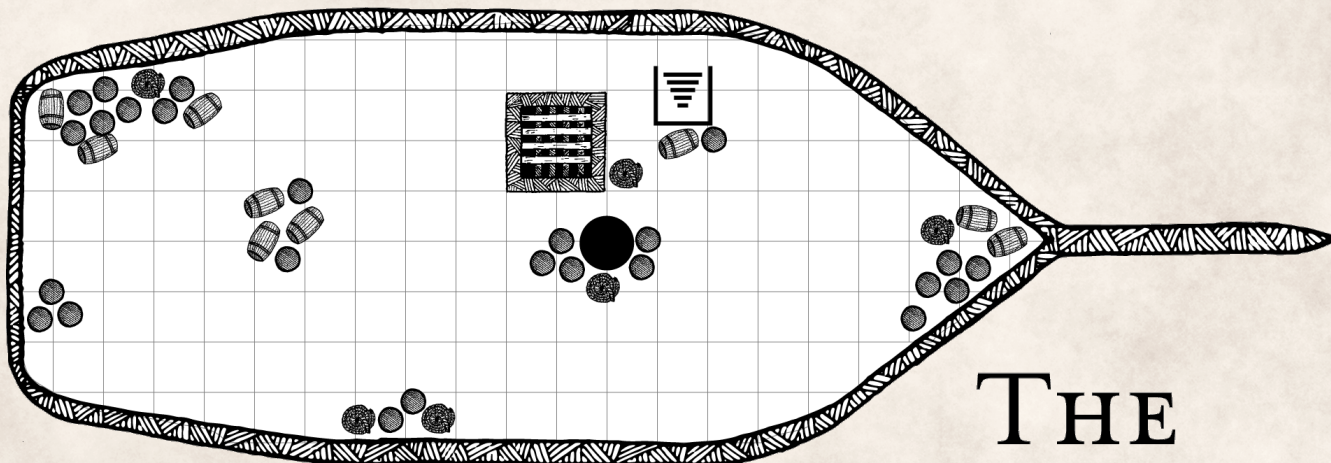
If the heroes do persuade the captain to turn the ship around and face their foe, the pirates will be slightly intimidated, and send fewer men over in the boarding attempt.

**Note:** If the players attempt to fetch Raven, they will find her bunk empty and the elf nowhere to be found.

In actual fact, due to the commotion on the upper decks, Raven decided to leave her bunk, and look through the cargo hatch in the central lower compartment to see what might be happening. She then moved to the main deck, through the hatch, and blended in with the crew. When the pirates board the *The Lady Luck*, the pirate lieutenant, Dorrn, lands on the deck right beside Raven and immediately takes her captive. The heroes will see this in the *Development of the Pirate Boarding encounter*.

**Note:** If you chose to run with the ‘*Prisoner*’ suggested hook and Raven was tied up or manacled by the heroes, then she was able to escape by using her magical abilities to coerce a stowaway rat into chewing through her bindings and setting her free.

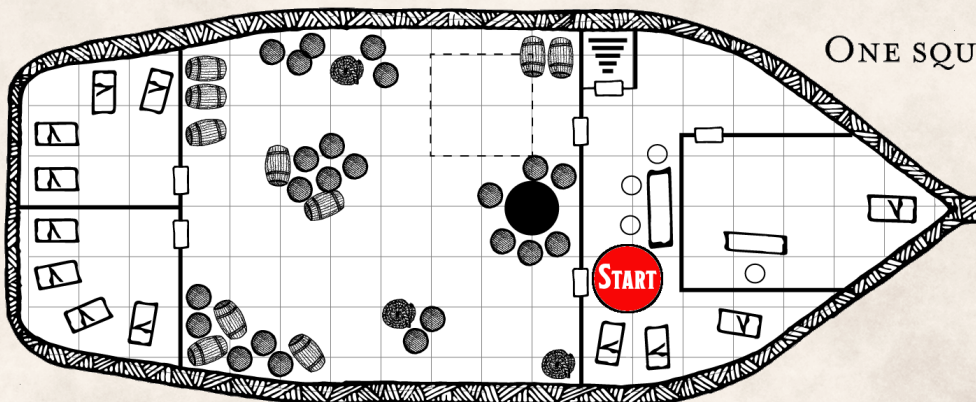




MAIN DECK

# THE LADY LUCK

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



CARGO HOLD

## KEY

	CARGO HATCH		BUNK
	BARRELS & CRATES		LADDER
	TABLE/DESK & CHAIRS		MASTS
	DOOR		SHIP'S WHEEL
			STAIRS



## 2. PIRATE BOARDING

Regardless of which direction *The Lady Luck* ended up going, read or paraphrase the following:

As the pirate ship draws nearer, two thirds of *The Lady Luck*'s crew members ready their weapons, whilst the rest keep the ship underway.

Black clouds loom ominously overhead, as the first crack of lightning splits the gloomy sky. **"One mile and closing!"** you hear from the crow's nest above. The cargo vessel starts to pitch up and down as the swell begins to grow.

Over the next hour the pirates draw closer and are finally within archer range. You can see around 60 savage pirates shouting taunts and hooting in laughter! As the pirate ship draws within close range, a large orc wearing black leggings, a purple long tail jacket, and a tricorn pirate hat can be seen standing on the command deck, eagerly awaiting the conflict.

At this point, allow the players to decide if they want to launch a ranged assault on the pirate ship first.

**Note:** If the PCs aim for *Captain Gold-Tusk (Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters)*, he will use his reaction to cast his *Shield* spell on himself in an attempt to deflect any arrows.

After 1 round, read or paraphrase the following:

Just as the black pirate ship gets within about 20 feet from the cargo vessel, two large ballista can be seen taking aim across your decks. Thick coils of berthing rope with large grappling hooks attached to their ends, fire across *The Lady Luck*'s deck and land in the water on the opposite side. Immediately after, another two are fired to the same effect. The pirates begin to operate a large crank for each rope. As the grappling hooks take a firm hold, and the ropes begin to wind in, the 2 ships are brought along side each other.

If the pirates chased down the cargo vessel, read or paraphrase the following:

25 pirates begin to clamber and struggle to get across the rails of the ships as they begin their assault. Lightning cracks and strikes the water 20 feet away. Rain begins to pour and the ships pitch up and down, and side to side, crashing into each other in their chaotic tango.

If the cargo vessel turned to face the pirates, read or paraphrase the following:

The pirates' cheers and taunts seem half-hearted as they visibly become slightly unsure of the crew's bravery in meeting them for battle. Only 15 pirates begin to clamber and struggle to get across the rails of the ships as they begin their assault. Lightning cracks and strikes the water 20 feet away. Rain begins to pour and the ships pitch up and down, and side to side, crashing into each other in their chaotic tango.

**Note:** All checks and rolls to hit will be done so with **Disadvantage**, due to balance being effected by the severe weather and the ship's unsteady deck. Exceptions to this rule are where a PC has proficiency in **Dexterity (Acrobatics)**, or the **sailor background**. All of the pirates and cargo crewmen are immune to this effect.

Should a savvy PC attempt to free the vessel's hold, each of the 4 berthing ropes has an **AC 11**, and **30 Hit Points**. However, any attack on the ropes will be done with **Disadvantage** (unless exempt) due to the rough sea swell, as per the note above.

As the pirates begin their assault on *The Lady Luck*, allow the PCs to attempt to stop them from climbing over, either by an opposed **Shove (PHB, pg. 195)** verses the **pirate's Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, or via a standard attack action. None of *The Lady Luck*'s crew will attempt this. Once some of the pirates make it across, **roll for initiative**.



## CREATURES

25 x Pirates (15 if *The Lady Luck* turned to face them) (**Bandits, MM. pg. 343**).

10 x Cargo Crewmen armed (**Commoner, MM, pg. 345**).

5 x Cargo Crewmen unarmed (**Commoner, MM, pg. 345**).

## TACTICS

The surviving boarding pirates will spread themselves evenly amongst the heroes and crewmen, and begin their attack. All pirates fight to the death, and no pirate will accept surrender from either *The Lady Luck*'s crew or the players.

Allow the combat to go on for as long as it appears the party are still able to fight. Once the party or the pirates are on minimal hit points, or begin to lose, then proceed to **Development** (this page).

**Note:** You may find it difficult to run an encounter with so many NPCs fighting, and your players may become bored. In this case, it is suggested that you run the combat with two pirates to every one PC. For example, if you have four PCs, then only eight pirates will engage them in combat, and the rest of the battle between pirates and crewmen is thematically played out as background action.

## DEVELOPMENT

Read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, you each look up to see another large orc pirate; this one carries a large trident, with a bandanna over his head. He is dragging Raven by her hair along the deck; you visibly see fear welling up in her eyes as she hopelessly fights to escape.

The swell dips incredibly low, as the sea begins to rise in a wall of water. You look up momentarily as a gigantic tidal wave looms from above, gathering momentum and size. Both ships begin to move involuntarily into the sucking force of the wave. All fighting ceases and it quickly becomes every man and woman for themselves. Pirates and crewmen alike, clamber to find something to hold onto, as it becomes glaringly obvious that both ships are going to be swallowed and capsized by the immense power and force of the wave.

As the ships turn upside down halfway up the wall of water, they begin to fall back on themselves and into the distant ocean below.

The impact with the ravaging ocean is hard, and then the world as you know it goes black.

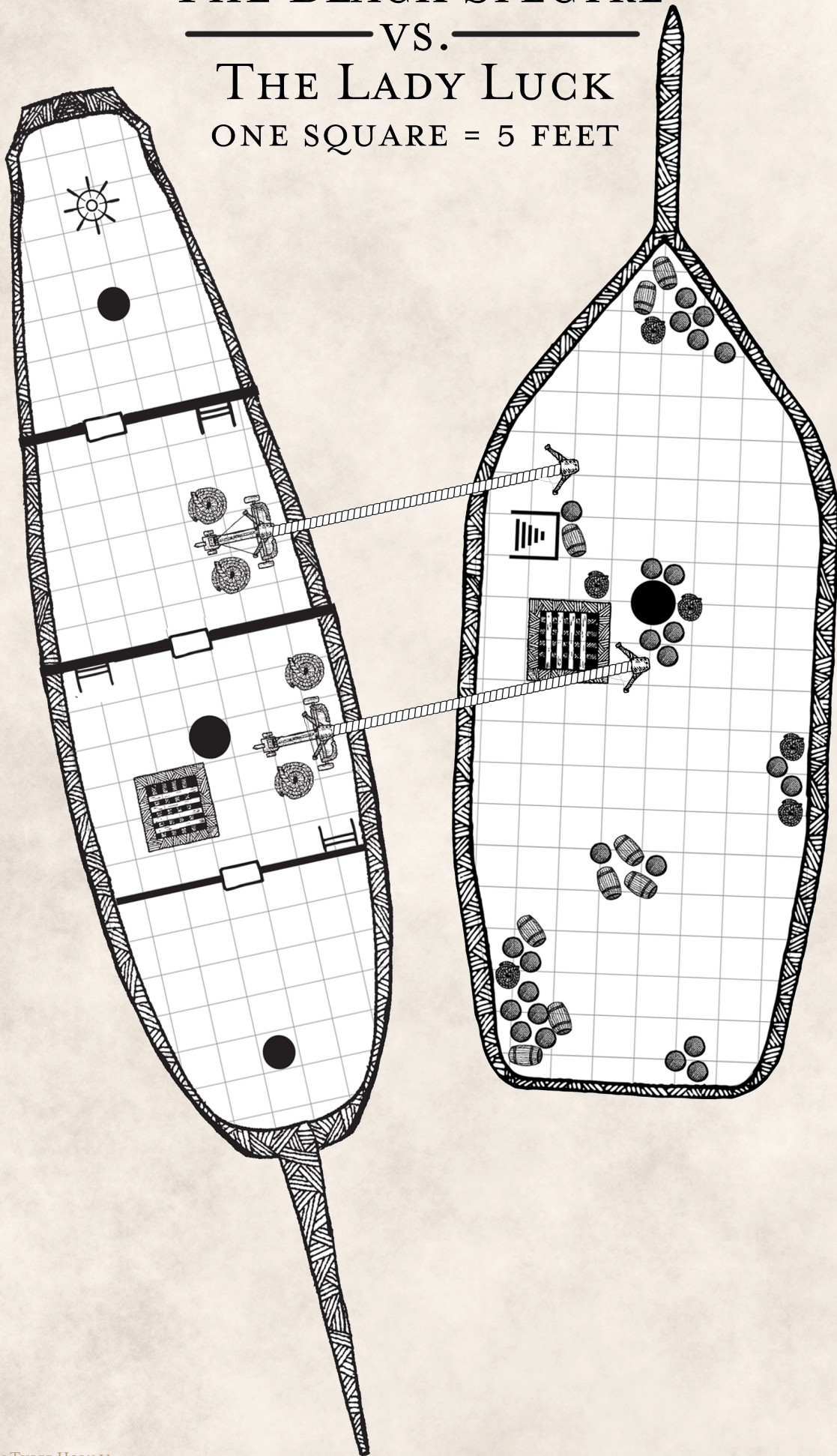


# THE BLACK SPECTRE

VS.

## THE LADY LUCK

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET





## CHAPTER 3: THE LOST ISLAND OF SELU

The Island of Selu was once a mighty nation of warriors, in ages past. The land and the wildlife thrived, as so did its people. Secluded just off the coast of the mainland of Chult on the Sword Coast, it took a daring adventurer to decide to visit the wilds of the island, and while some did attempt Selu, few ever returned. No guts, no glory they say, and the same rang true with those that did survive, for they returned wealthier than kings, bringing back with them hoards of gold, sacks full of rare rubies, and relics of ancient magical power.

Hundreds of years ago, some unknown force ripped the island from its place off the shores of Chult and cast it deep into uncharted waters within the Trackless Sea. There the island sat for hundreds of years undiscovered, surrounded by a magical fog and an ever revolving mega-storm that protected it from discovery. Occasionally, a ship and its crew stumble upon the island by accident, face the storm at its most furious, and are never seen nor heard from again.

The Island of Selu is a place of undisturbed adventure, hulking dinosaurs, grave danger, and fierce tribal warriors. Magic is generally feared by all three inhabiting tribes, and is forbidden to all except the three witch doctors. There is one witch doctor per tribe, and even then, they are looked upon with fear and distrust.

Welcome to the Lost Island of Selu!

### 1. STARTING LOCATIONS

The heroes will regain consciousness and find themselves washed ashore at one of the following two starting locations:

- **1A:** Northern Beach Awakening, or
- **1B:** Southern Beach Awakening

From this point forward, follow the wilderness map (**Appendix B: The Lost Island of Selu - DM's Map**) to cross-reference the respective encounter numbers as the adventurers explore the chosen part of the Island of Selu.

Choose one of the following two options to start this adventure depending on how challenging you want this adventure to be. The first is to start the adventurers at the same location; a random roll of the dice will determine which location they start at. The second is to split the party; this will increase the challenge of the adventure, and survival in the wilderness becomes a much harder task:

1. **Same starting location (medium).** Roll a d20 for the party as a whole. On a roll of 1-10 the entire party awakens on the **Northern Beach (area 1A)**. On a roll of 11-20 the entire party awakens on the **Southern Beach (area 1B)**.
2. **Splitting the party (hard).** Roll a d20 for each player within your group. On a roll of 1-10 that PC will awaken on the **Northern Beach (area 1A)**. On a roll of 11-20 the PC will awaken on the **Southern Beach (area 1B)**.

**Note:** Alternatively you may pick, as to your desire, which PC starts where at any point/encounter along the Seluian coast line.

#### 1A. NORTHERN BEACH AWAKENING

As the heroes awaken from being washed ashore, they can see each other spread sporadically about the beach (unless alone, as per the d20 location roll). On a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check** or an **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, the PCs can work out that they are located on the northern side of the island. They will only find those party members starting on **Northern Beach**.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You hear birds screaming, and your head thumps in pain. You open your eyes to bright and blinding sunlight. You can feel the sunburn setting into your skin and your mouth feels like cotton as the thirst hits you hard. As you raise your head you look around to see a white sandy beach stretching for miles. Inland you see what looks to be the beginnings of grassy plains.



At this point, have the heroes each roll a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, the hero will gain 1 level of **Exhaustion (PHB, pg. 291)**. Finishing a long rest reduces the heroes exhaustion level by 1, provided that they have also ingested some food and drink in the past 24 hours. If the heroes do not eat food and drink some water at least once per day, they will gain 1 level of Exhaustion each evening on the days that they do not eat or drink.

If multiple PCs washed ashore in the same place, read or paraphrase the following:

You notice movement a few hundred feet from you, as you sigh in relief to see your companion also making their way to their feet, obviously in a similar condition to yourself.

Allow the players to rendezvous on the beach, and decide where they would like to explore next. This may be aided by showing them the **Player's Map of the Lost Island of Selu (Appendix c)**.

If the party was split, move on to the other group of heroes who awaken in **1B - Southern Beach Awakening**.

### 1B. SOUTHERN BEACH AWAKENING

As the heroes awaken from being washed ashore, they can see each other spread sporadically about the beach (unless alone as per the d20 location roll). On a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check** or a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** the PCs can work out that they are located on the southern side of the island. They will only find those party members that start on the **Southern Beach** with them, at this point.

Read or paraphrase the following:

With an aching head and a mouth full of sand, you awaken on a black sand beach. As you open your eyes, the first thing you see is a black stream of smoke bellowing from behind tropical forest in the distance. Getting to your unsteady feet, you first notice the beach ends a few hundred feet inland and then turns into what looks to be the beginnings of foothills. They must lead closer to the mountain range that completes the picturesque background of the tropical island. Large birds circle the skies above.

At this point, have the heroes each roll a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, the hero will gain 1 level of **Exhaustion (PHB, pg. 291)**. Finishing a long rest reduces the heroes exhaustion level by 1, provided that they have also ingested some food and drink in the past 24 hours. If the heroes do not eat food and drink some water at least once per day, they will gain 1 level of Exhaustion each evening on the days that they do not eat or drink.

If multiple PCs washed ashore in the same place, read or paraphrase the following:

You notice movement a few hundred feet from you. Worried at first, you recognise them as companions.

Allow the players to rendezvous on the black beach, and decide where they would like to explore next. This may be aided by showing them the **Player's Map of the Lost Island of Selu (Appendix C)**.



## 2. PIRATE ENCAMPMENT

In this scene the adventurers will make their way slowly along the beach to the east; large cliffs shoot up from the sandy shoreline leaving the beach narrow and full of sand dunes. The heroes will eventually come over a large sand dune where they will discover the pirate's shipwreck. A short distance up the beach a group of around 30 pirates seem to be making a camp and attempting to rescue provisions from their ruined ship. The pirate survivors will not spot the adventurers from this distance, unless the adventurers make themselves known. There is no way further east, other than choosing to climb the **mountains (see area 4)**, without going across the beach occupied by pirates, who will likely spot any foolish adventurer who tries to attempt it. The pirate who seems to be in charge does not look like the golden-tusked orc pirate captain seen earlier during the boarding. The hulking hobgoblin is the ship's lieutenant, **Dorr n (see Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters)**. He wears a red bandanna around his head, and he carries a large trident.

If the heroes decide to spy on the pirates, and manage to succeed a combined average **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, they will be able to get close enough, hiding in some shrubbery, to hear the pirate's conversation.

They will learn that:

- **The pirates plan to scout the western side of the island.**
- **They then plan to raid, pillage, and enslave any small town or village they come across, and take it as their own to use as their base of operations.**
- **They are also attempting to tame some large reptilian beasts into fighting alongside them.**

If the heroes try to move any further up the beach, they will need to succeed on a **DC 20 Dexterity (Stealth) check**. On failure, the pirate lookouts will spot the heroes. They will alert the entire camp of 30 pirates (**Bandits; MM, pg. 343**) who will attempt to chase them down, herding them back towards the west. Once past the dunes, as shown on the map of the Island of Selu, the pirates will give up on the chase.

## CLIFFS & MOUNTAINS

Please see **Area 4: Dead-end Mountains**.

**Note:** The aim of this scene is to deny the players access to the eastern side of the Island of Selu. This is due to the eastern side being designed for future sequel adventures of a higher level character than this adventure is designed for. This is in the PCs best interests for survival, as well as helping drive this story to its epic conclusion.

## 3. PLAINS OF THE TRICERATOPS

This encounter will see the adventurers come across a large herd of triceratops grazing on the grassy plains.

As the heroes make their way up to the plains from the beach (or whichever direction that they came from), read or paraphrase the following:

As you make your way up onto the vast grassy plain you at once notice hundreds of large creatures, slowly going about their business, grazing on the sporadic bushes and grass, much like large cows with three horns, one on their snouts and two above their brows

On a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature or History) check**, a hero will recognise the dinosaurs as **Triceratops (Appendix A)**, read or paraphrase the following:

As you come closer to one you realise, to your amazement, that this is no mere animal, but something rarer, something that you have only ever heard about in children's stories. Huge dinosaurs, called triceratops. From the brows blossom out large bony frills, obviously used as a kind of armor. They look peaceful enough though, but you get the feeling you would not want to alarm them.

If the adventurers move through the grassy plains, they will notice that if they move normally (no stealth attempt) any triceratops close-by will start to become a little agitated, snorting and swaying its head from side to side. If the heroes continue on this path, the triceratops will charge at them but will go back to its grazing after one attempt. This can be avoided with a successful



**DC 5 Dexterity (Stealth) check** by each of the adventurers.

Once they are halfway, read or paraphrase the following:

As you reach the midway point of the plain of the three horned beasts, a scream for help pierces the air. The dinosaurs begin to become restless and agitated but return to their grazing once the noise stops. The source of the cry for help seems to be coming from the steep rock formations at the base of the mountains to the south-east.

If the heroes decide to move through the herd to go and investigate the cry for help, read or paraphrase the following:

Approaching the rocky crags that lead into the mountains, you come to the far side of a large rock. Here you see a member of the Black Spectre's pirate crew cornered by one of the furious three-horned beasts, his back flat against the rock's hard surface. As he looks at you with fear in his one good eye, the dinosaur lowers its deadly horns and hoofs the ground, ready to charge.

**"Help me please! Kill the beast! Lead it away! Anything!!!",** he pleads.

### TACTICS

If the heroes talk to him or interrogate him, the pirate, Wyatt, will convey his change of heart in becoming a pirate (*see Wyatt's Story, this page*). If the PCs decide to help Wyatt, he will simply

prove to be a good guy that chose to take the wrong job. If rescued, Wyatt will join the heroes and help where required, to the best of his average & cowardly abilities.

The heroes can use whatever means necessary to either calm or scare the triceratops away. Regardless of the skill check used, they must succeed against a **DC 13**. On failure, the triceratops will charge at Wyatt and attack with a **Gore Attack (Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters, or MM, pg. 80)**.

### WYATT'S STORY

The pirate's name is Wyatt Threetooth (**Appendix A**) and he was a deckhand aboard the Black Spectre. He resented being at the bottom of the pecking order in the pirate crew, and had serious reservations about signing up to begin with. Now this; a dinosaur readying to charge and skewer him on its horns. He didn't need this, and he had decided, just recently (in the past few minutes in fact), that he just wasn't cut out for being a pirate.

### DEVELOPMENT

If the triceratops was calmed, either magically or by using a skill such as **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** for instance, then it will peacefully move back to the herd and resume its grazing.

If the triceratops was scared away, with a skill such as **Charisma (Intimidation)** or any attack on it (magical or otherwise), the triceratops will skitter and charge back to the herd. However,





in doing so the herd will go berserk. Before the heroes can do anything, other than to attempt escape, 100 triceratops begin to stampede towards their direction from the northern plain; they are currently 100 feet away and approaching.

Advise the players that there are 3 immediately obvious escape routes:

- One option is to climb over the edge of the nearby cliff that drops into the valley below, by using hanging vines that lead over its edge. A successful **DC 11 Strength (Athletics) check** will ensure that the heroes keep hold of the vine. On failure, allow the hero to attempt it two more times as they slide further towards the dangling end of the vine. If the hero fails all three checks, they will slide off the end of the vine and drop 50 feet into a **Pteranodon Nest** (see *Area 5*).
- The second escape option is to make a **Dash Action (PHB, pg. 192)** for the valley entrance pathway located on the opposite/western side of the cliff, 100 feet away, between the jungle and the mountains. The idea is that the PCs must get across the edge of the cliff before the stampede cuts them off. **Roll Initiative** and allow the players to dash or make any action of their choosing on their turn. On the triceratops stampede turn, roll 10d10 to see how far (in feet) the stampede advanced each round. Play this round by round to increase tension as the PCs try to outrun the stampede. If a hero is caught by the stampede, roll a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**; on a failed save the hero will take **38 (6d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage** as they are stomped and trodden on. A successful save will see the hero nimbly skip to safety.
- The third option is for the heroes to flee to the east. They will immediately realise that the way is blocked by the steep rock-face that shoots up into the mountains spires beyond, and the stampede is coming their way. However, on a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** the heroes will discover a small cave entrance hidden behind a small grove of bushy trees. This will lead to the **Lizardfolk Tunnels (Area 14)**.

Once the triceratops stampede gets to where the heroes were originally, they will wheel around to the east, just missing running over the cliff. They will then slowly disperse and return to their grazing about the open plains.

#### 4. DEAD-END MOUNTAINS

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The mountains that separate the western half of the Island of Selu from the eastern side rise up in tall peaks that disappear from view above the enveloping volcanic smoke clouds. The only true path east is via the Nula Ruins in Three Horn Valley.

If the heroes decide that they want to scale the cliff and climb into the steep mountains beyond, allow them to try. The initial cliff face scales up 700 feet. Have the PCs roll a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** for every 50 feet they climb, over the first 300 feet. At 300 feet this will increase to **DC 15** and the hero will gain 1 level of **Exhaustion (PHB, pg. 291)**. On a failed **Strength (Athletics) check**, the hero will also gain a level of Exhaustion and will physically feel their grip start to slip. The PC will be given the opportunity to easily climb back down with no damage taken. If the hero insists on trying to climb the cliff again, the next failed check will result in the adventurer losing their grip, and falling the distance to the ground, thereby taking the relevant **Falling Damage (PHB, pg. 183)**.

**Note** - The aim of this scene is to deny the players access to the eastern side of the Island of Selu. This is due to the eastern side being designed for future sequel adventures of a higher level character than this adventure is designed for. This is in the PCs best interests for survival, as well as helping drive this story to its epic conclusion.

#### 5. THE PTERANODON NEST

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There are three ways that a hero can enter this encounter by:

- dropping into the pteranodon nest from failing their strength checks in **Area 3 - Plains of the Triceratops**;
- being attacked by swooping pteranodons in **Area 12 - Pteranodon Beach** and carried back to the nest.
- jumping across to the nest via the lookout ledge in **Lizardfolk Tunnels (Area 14)**.



It is also possible that all of these scenarios happen. If this is the case, run the encounters separately if required, or run it with all heroes entering it at the same time; either should be fine.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You drop heavily into what seems, at first, to be a bunch of twigs and branches mottled together and hanging from the side of the cliff face. When you raise your head, you notice that it is actually a nest with some broken shells from a recent hatching.

A ‘squawk’ almost deafens you from behind, and you turn to find the three dinosaurs with wings, about the size of wolves; one red, one green, and one yellow. It seems that you have found some hatch-lings. Within seconds, a large shadow looms over you and you are suddenly aware of the watchful eye of their mother, obviously preparing her young for their first lesson in hunting.

The young pteranodons begin to hop forward nipping at the air in front of you; their razor sharp teeth snapping dangerously.

On a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check**, each succeeding hero notices the following:

You notice, from the corner of your eye, a large and ruined ancient structure in the valley below. A stream of water runs through its centre. It looks more secure and defensible than anywhere else you have seen thus far on this island.

## CREATURES

1 x Large Pteranodon Mother (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*)

3 x Pteranodon Hatch-lings (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*)

## TACTICS

If the heroes linger or decide to attack the hatchlings, roll for initiative and apply the following:

- The hatch-lings will snap at the heroes with their **Bite Attack**, attempting to utilise their **Pack Tactics** feature.
- The mother pteranodon will not allow the heroes to attack her young without punishment, and will attack with her **Bite Attack** from behind, utilising her **Flyby** feature.

**Note:** If there are heroes still hanging from the vines above, allow them the opportunity to join the combat after round 1.

## DEVELOPMENT

Once the heroes have either defeated the pteranodons, or they have decided to look for an escape avenue, advise the heroes that there is a ledge with a cave entrance only a short 10 feet leaping distance from the nest. A successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** will allow a hero to jump and reach the ledge. On a failed check, the hero will need to make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**; on a success the hero will grab the edge of the ledge and will be able to pull themselves up. On a failed save, the hero will fall 50 feet to the valley floor below (*Area 16*), taking **5d6 bludgeoning damage** (*PHB, pg. 183*).

The ledge and cave entrance will lead into the **Lizardfolk Tunnels** (*Area 14*).





## 6. A CLIFF WITH A VIEW

If the heroes are either looking out over the cliff into the valley below, still hanging from the vines or running down the western path to the village, they notice the following:

- In the heart of the valley, an ancient ruined fortress with a stream of fresh looking water running through it. It will look as though it is easily defendable and a perfect place for shelter.
- A multi-legged beast climbs a cliff face some distance away towards the opposite side of the valley. A rider is harnessed to its back and they move with speed towards what looks to be a small village to the west of the valley. (**Note to DM:** That rider is, in fact, **Raven**, the young elven woman who was traveling with the heroes aboard *The Lady Luck*. She has befriended a young behir as her companion and mount)

## 7. THE FOOTHILLS

As the heroes make their way into the foothills, read or paraphrase the following:

You come upon a scene of rolling foothills. They appear to get larger the closer they get to the central mountains to the north and west. These scenic mountains soar to great heights, forming a serene prehistoric backdrop. Grass rises to waist height and flows in a silent dance as the southern winds blow across their surface.

After a few miles of walking, or when you deem that the time is right, any PC succeeding a **DC 13 Wisdom (perception) check** will notice three strange shapes cutting through the waist high grass, zigzagging from the east, south and west. They then begin to move in figure 8 patterns, holding a position at about 500 feet away.

They look like long whip-like tails sprouting up from the flowing tall grass.

### SITUATION

These fast moving whip-like tails cutting through the tall grass are actually a pack of **Velociraptors** (**Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters**).

If the heroes keep the same pace or stop, the velociraptors will continue to move in figure 8 patterns and follow slowly, keeping a safe distance of around 250 feet. They are toying with the PCs. This will continue until either the adventurers reach **Raptor Pass (Area 8)** or break into a run to escape the pursuers.

If the heroes decide to run away, the velociraptors will move in for the kill, as three more join in on the hunt (6 in total). They will surround the adventurers approaching at their normal speed (60 feet per round) from the east, south and west sides; leaving only the north as a possible escape route. **Roll initiative** and run the following combat encounter when they catch up to the adventurers:

### TACTICS

**Note** - If the heroes did not spot the velociraptor's approach, then they will be surprised for the first round of combat.

**Round 1:** The first three velociraptors will each speed up to the adventurers and utilize their **Pounce** feature to burst from the curtain of grass with ferocity.

- The other group of three velociraptors will hang back until the first three have been defeated, or wait until round 4 and then move in.

**Rounds 2 & 3:** The attacking three velociraptors will attack to kill their prey with combinations of either **Bite** or **Claw**.

**Round 4:** The second group of three velociraptors will start to harass the party, running past the heroes (on their southern flank) leaving enough distance not to attract an **attack of opportunity**. This will continue until the heroes break into a run towards **Raptor Pass (Area 8)**.

(**Note to DM:** You may need to drop a hint that the Raptors will continue to harass them until they eventually gain the upper hand and that retreat (towards Raptor Pass) is always an option.)

## 8. RAPTOR PASS

This encounter is a small passage located in between a pass through two small mountain



peaks. This is the velociraptor nesting territory. If the heroes have been chased here by the pack on the foothills, they have been lead here via a hunting technique that the velociraptors employ. They use it for capturing larger prey, by herding the prey into the heart of their nesting area, only to be ambushed by the rest of their pack.

After the heroes have traveled through the foothills for a few miles, read or paraphrase the following:

As you make your way over the last of the foothills, you come upon a gap in the mountain peaks. It seems to be a passage into the safety of the valley beyond. At the bottom sits an old ruin of a fortress lost to a time long ago.

When the heroes decide to venture into the pass, read or paraphrase the following:

The cut through the mountains is covered in low grass, as the rocky crags stretch high above on either side. You can see the ruined fortress loom closer the further you descend into the valley. It is only when you are about one hundred feet into the pass that you hear the **'BARK'** echo from behind you. Looking over your shoulder you see many small dinosaurs, with whip-like tails, and one razor sharp claw on each foot. It is then that you notice the numerous nests scattered about the rocky terrain. The path ahead of you is clear of dinosaurs and the safety of the fortress is within reach. Let the chase begin!

## THE CHASE

Have your players roll for initiative and run the following chase map utilising the **chase rules** (DMG, pg. 252) with the following **Chase Rule** variations:

### CHASE RULES

**Starting Distance** - 100 feet as shown on the map.

**Dashing:** Any participant, during the chase scene, may freely use the **Dash** action a number of times equal to **3 + its Constitution modifier**. Each additional Dash action that it takes during the chase requires the creature to succeed on a

**DC 10 Constitution saving throw** at the end of its turn or gain one level of exhaustion. A short or long rest will remove the levels of exhaustion gained during the chase.

**Opportunity Attacks:** All participants within the chase cannot gain an opportunity attack. However, any creature that is not considered as part of the chase, such as a any creature crossing the chases path, may take an opportunity attack.

**Escape Factors:** See **Ending The Chase** (DMG, pg. 253) for rules applying to escaping or ending the chase. For this particular chase scene, there are large craggy rocks, caves and streams that a PC may attempt to hide in or behind.

**Chase Complications:** At the end of each participant's turn, they must roll a **d20** against the **Wilderness Chase Complications table** (DMG, pg. 254) to possibly incur a random complication or obstacle:

- Re-roll: 4s, 7s, and 8s
- **On rolling a 10 (Player):** Add another velociraptor to the chase. It jumps out of a nest or cave, and joins the rest of the pack.
- **On Rolling a 10 (Velociraptor):** A large pteranodon swoops down from high above, snatches the velociraptor in its talons, and flies away with its prey into the mountains.

**The Pursuers:** There are 4 velociraptors per each PC involved in the chase. They begin the chase from behind the heroes, 100 feet away, and higher up the pass. They seem to have ambushed the heroes. They will **never** use their **Dash** action, and will always run at their normal speed of 60 feet. **Allow the PCs to be able to drop obstacles in the pursuer's path to slow them down as a bonus action.**

**Escape Point:** The chase will end once the heroes each pass the **'finish line'** on the chase map. At this point the velociraptors will be killed by several arrows that appear from nowhere.

## DEVELOPMENT

Once the heroes have successfully reached the escape point of the chase, a group of tribal hunters carrying longbows will greet the surviving heroes at the end of the map; jump straight to **Three Horn Valley (Area 16)**.





## VALLEY CHASE

ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

TOTAL CHASE LENGTH = ~250 FT.



## 9. THE MAELSTROM

If the heroes decide they want to travel east along the southern beach, read or paraphrase the following:

You begin to hear the loud roar of water up ahead and you make your way along the southern coast of the island. Before long, you come upon a large bay where the mountain suddenly meets the ocean, blocking any true passage east. Engulfing the entire body of water is a giant maelstrom, twisting and turning in a chaotic dance; any further passage in that direction will meet with nothing but peril.

This area is practically impassable, and if the heroes attempt to swim the maelstrom, they will gain one level of exhaustion per round and require a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check** for every 10 feet of controlled swimming. On a fail, the hero will be swept in a clockwise direction, and gain one level of exhaustion per round until successfully making the check.

**Note:** If the hero decides to return to the western shore and exit the water, allow them to do so without the need for further ability checks.

Once the hero reaches exhaustion level 5, they will be unable to hold themselves afloat; run the **suffocating rules (PHB, pg. 183)** from this point forward as they dip beneath the surface of the carnage. Other PCs may be able to rescue a drowning hero.

If the heroes decide to try and climb the mountainous peaks, please see **Area 4: Dead-end Mountains**.

## 10. THE JUNGLES OF SELU

The Jungles of Selu are a dangerous place indeed, not only because of the many types of dinosaurs, beasts, and monsters, but the environment itself has been known to cause many deaths. Pit holes, poisonous plants and tribal hunting traps can often cause the less perceptive or experienced adventurers much trouble in the thick jungles of Selu.

**Travel in the Jungle:** Traveling through the thick jungle can be difficult and taxing at the best of times. Treat traveling through the jungle as **rough terrain (half movement speed)**. For every 500 feet, or 1 hex on the map (**see Appendix C: Player's Map**), the PCs must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** or gain 1 level of exhaustion.

For every 500 feet, or 1 hex, that the adventurers travel whilst in the jungle area, roll a **d20**; on a 1-14, roll against the **Random Jungle Encounters** table below.

**Note:** After the adventurers have been moving through the jungle for a while, or on the third encounter, see **Tribal Guide (area 10A)**.

### 10A. TRIBAL GUIDE

Read or paraphrase the following:

Three tribal men step out from behind the thicket of giant jungle plants. They wear loin cloth, carry short spears, and adorn tribal war paint over the rest of their bare bodies.

They say nothing, only hold their fingers to their lips in a 'shhh', signaling to keep quiet.

They beckon you to follow them, and walk on leading you through much easier passages in the jungle. Before long you come to the edge of the jungle where the clay structures of a tribal village appear before you.

Once the heroes arrive at the village, let them find refuge and refer to **Paku Village (Area 15)**.



## RANDOM JUNGLE ENCOUNTERS

### d12 Encounter

- 1 3x **Velociraptors (Appendix A)** ambush and surround the party in a small outcropping; they attack to kill and will attempt to flee if one of them dies.
- 2 Hunter's trap! A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** will allow the characters to see the carefully placed giant jungle leaves covering a pit trap. If not specifically avoided, a hero will fall into the pit taking 1d6 piercing damage from the spikes within it.
- 3 The heroes approach a small outcropping with a small rock-pool of fresh water. Beside it is an **Ankylosaurus (MM, pg. 79)** casually refreshing itself in the stifling heat. If the heroes leave the Ankylosaurus alone, it will pay them no heed. If they disturb it physically, it will attack out of annoyance. Allow the PCs to refresh themselves to avoid exhaustion if they wish.
- 4 A lost band of **Pirates (Bandit; MM, pg. 343)** attempting to find their way through the jungle. They will attack on sight in an attempt to loot the heroes of water and food for survival.
- 5 A wild boar is caught in a hunter's trap. It struggles weakly but is ultimately dying. As it draws its final breaths, allow the heroes to use the dead boar as a source of food to avoid exhaustion.
- 6 The heroes come upon a small hill of twisted vines and rotting vegetation that blocks their path. If the heroes attempt to climb over it, they will immediately awaken the **Shambling Mound (MM, pg. 270)**, with **50 hit points**. It attacks.
- 7-9 The heroes sight a multi-legged monster high above, jumping from tree to tree; a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check** will recognise it as a **Behir (MM, pg. 25)**. On its back rides a beautiful elven woman, with long blonde hair and a mischievous look. Its **Raven!** She gazes over at the heroes, smiles, nods in acknowledgment, and then kicks her mount to race ahead, disappearing into the thicket of the jungle treetops towards the east.
- 10 Three tribal men step out from behind the thicket of giant jungle plants. They wear loin cloth, carry spears, and are adorned with tribal war paint over the rest of their bodies. **See 10A: Tribal Guide.**
- 11 Suddenly the ground slopes down unexpectedly, and the heroes must succeed a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** or slip onto their backs and slide steeply into the shallow valley below. It is filled with **Snakes (2x swarm of Poisonous Snakes; MM, pg. 338)**. They attack.
- 12 The heroes approach a large nest that sits about the size of a small house. Many bones and rotted carcass lay about, half eaten. An egg sits in the middle of the nest, with no mother to be seen. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** will deduce that this is a **Tyrannosaurus Rex's (MM, pg. 80)** nest. The mother, presently absent, is not known to venture far, and may return at any moment.

### 11. PTERANODON BAY

As the heroes make their way onto the beach read or paraphrase the following:

As you and your companions make your way further along the sandy beach, you hear a loud bird-like '**CAWWW**' from high above.

Upon looking up, you see several large bird-like silhouettes circling in the sky. Suddenly one dives, and then another. As they drop closer and closer at top-speed, you realise that these are no normal birds; they are winged dinosaurs, and they want you for their next meal.

Have the players **roll for initiative**.

### CREATURES

10 x Large Pteranodon Mother (**Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters**).

### TACTICS

The Pteranodons swoop, but not to kill. They attempt to snatch and carry away any hero that they can, starting with the smallest hero first. Run the **grappling rules (PHB, pg. 195)**, with the Pteranodons having **advantage** on their **Strength (Athletics) check** to grapple.

**Note:** If the hero is of the large size category or above, the Pteranodon will be unable to lift the hero off the ground and will release them on the failed attempt.



## DEVELOPMENT

As long as the heroes are in the Pteranodon Bay zone (**Appendix B: DM's Map**) they will continue to be attacked by the Pteranodons. The attacks cease once the characters exit the area.

If a hero is carried away, read or paraphrase the following:

As the large flying dinosaur takes hold, it begins to rise higher, and higher. The island below shrinks away, and you get a bird's-eye view of this part of the island.

You first notice the large valley and realise that this may be your destination. Within the valley stands an old ruined fortress, a stream running through it looks to flow with fresh water from the rain forest and mountains.

Flying past the ruins, the pteranodon eventually hovers over a large nest within the valley, high up a cliff face. Landing heavily, you are dropped into a nest.

For the heroes that were swept away, run the encounter in **Area 5: The Pteranodon Nest**.

**Note:** Every hero that was carried away will be dropped into the same nest. Any hero that attempts to break the grapple whilst in mid-flight will fall 500 feet (at its zenith). Employ the **falling rules** (**PHB, pg. 183**).

## 12. FOR GRICKS SAKE

Traveling along the beach, or through the Jungles of Selu, the heroes come to a black pebbled beach on the north-western side of the island. Many **Gricks** await them, hiding beneath the surface of the pebbled beach ready to pounce.

For every 500 feet (**one hex on Appendix B: DM's Map**), roll a **d20**; on a 10 or below, run the following encounter:

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you begin to approach the north-western beach of the island, the silky white sand starts to become littered with shiny black pebbles. Before long the sand disappears and the beach is taken over by the smooth obsidian rocks, which shift under your feet as you walk.

Roll the Grick's stealth check with advantage (as per its **Stone Camouflage** feat), versus the characters **Wisdom (Perception)** check.

For any hero that succeeds in spotting the Grick, read or paraphrase the following:

You travel a few miles more when you notice the pebbles shift slightly a few feet away from you. Something sits below the surface of the black rocks.

Any hero that did not spot the Grick will be **surprised** (**PHB, pg. 189**) for the first round of combat when it abruptly breaks the surface and attacks the group. Read or paraphrase the following:

Just as you start to move, the beach seems to explode in black pebble shrapnel. Bursting from the ground is a large worm-like creature as black as the ground it emerged from. Four tentacle type extremities flare out with viscous hooked claws on their ends. A drooling beak salivates from their centre. It attacks.

A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** check will recognise this monster as a **Grick**.

## CREATURES

1x Grick (**MM, pg. 173**)

## TACTICS

The Grick will attack to kill the heroes.

If its Hit Points are lowered to below 10% of its original hit points, the Grick will attempt to flee back underground, burrowing into the pebbles and disappearing.



### 13. THE LADY LUCK SHIPWRECK

*The Lady Luck*, that the adventurers first embarked on, was shipwrecked. It washed ashore and now sits in pieces on the westernmost beach of the Island of Selu. As the heroes approach the western beach, read or paraphrase the following:

The long beach stretches on. Before long you spot the shape of some kind of structure protruding the surface of the shallow waters off of the most western point of the island, far ahead.

As you get closer it becomes evident that this is the shipwreck of *The Lady Luck*. Various cargo is spread along the shoreline - bags of wool, depleting sacks of salt and wheat, and many crates of fruits, nuts, cheeses and other food supplies. There are also many bodies of those who obviously didn't survive the storm.

Allow the heroes to check the bodies in search for their companions, and scavenge what they need from the list of goods below.

#### SHIPWRECK LOOT

- 6000 lb of bagged wool
- 3000 lb of bagged salt (saturated, ruined and depleting)
- 10 barrels of assorted fruits & nuts in various stages of ruin (unless you decide to have the barrels sealed water tight).
- 2 kegs of ale
- 3 bottles of fine elven wine
- 4 dead crewmen bodies (including the ship's captain)
- 5 dead pirate bodies (no captain pirate)
- **OPTIONAL:** 5 random trinkets found in Loot The Room's random trinket tables  
(<http://www.dmsguild.com/product/194390/Loot-The-Room-100-New-Trinkets>)





## 14. LIZARDFOLK TUNNELS

The lizardfolk have inhabited the Island of Selu for as long as any living soul can remember. Once a thriving community, they were hunted to near extinction, driven from the western jungles of Selu, and finally found refuge in this tunneling cave system in the **Three Horn Valley**. They are very protective of their home, having once almost lost everything, and they will fight to the death to avoid losing what little they do have.

### A. ENTRANCE FROM THE PLAINS

Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a dank and moist cave entrance; the stench of mold and dampness appears to be a common feature of the area. The area is gloomy, and plunges into darkness towards the back of the cave. You find that at the back of the cave, the area narrows and starts to descend into the earth. You find a set of crudely made steps carved out of the earth's stone leading the way down. Lying on the steps are the skeletal remains of what looks to have been a gnomish adventurer, obviously having met an untimely death within these tunnels.

**Note:** A light of some sort will be required once the party moves beyond this room, with only those with darkvision being able to see unaided.

### B. SACRIFICIAL ALTAR

In this room, the heroes interrupt a ritual sacrificing a shaman lizardfolk and his follower are conducting. They have kidnapped a young tribal boy, and though his face scowls with defiance, tears can be visibly seen running down his mud streaked face.

#### CREATURES

1x Lizardfolk Shaman (*MM*, pg. 205)

1x Lizardfolk (*MM*, pg. 204)

1x Zol (Young Tribal Boy) (*Tribal Warrior*; *MM*, pg. 350), with 4 Max Hit Points

#### DEVELOPMENT

If the boy is rescued, he will not be able to speak any language that the heroes know. He will point to his chest and say his name 'Zol', he will then give each a warrior's handshake to show his respect for their bravery. He follows the heroes but does not participate in combat. Once outside, he leads the heroes to **Paku Village (Area 15:)**.

### C. WEAPONS ROOM

This room holds a pile of crude weaponry - spears, clubs, and shields made from turtle shells with large spiked animal horns protruding from their centre. There is a pile on each side of the narrow walkway; there is another staircase leading down.

### D. SLEEPING DEN

This room is filled with 6 slumbering **lizardfolk** (*MM*, pg. 204). Each PC must succeed a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check** if they decide to move through this room without waking them. The heroes may wish to attack from range, catching the sleeping lizardfolk by **Surprise**. Alternatively, they may wish to avoid the room altogether.

**Note:** There is a chance that the slumbering lizardfolk will awaken to any combat within the **Weapons Room (Area 14.C)** or the **Nesting Area & Secret Room (Area 14.G)**. If this is the case, they will venture to investigate the sound of combat, and possibly join the fight.

#### CREATURES

6x Lizardfolk (*MM*, pg. 204)

### E. FEEDING ROOM & LOOKOUT

As the heroes enter this room, they will smell it before they see it; the smell of rotting flesh. Upon entering, they will see piles of bones pushed into each corner, and a large slab of stone sits 10 feet long in the middle of the area; obviously used as a table by the lizardfolk.

Daylight streams through a cave opening at the end of a corridor sprouting out from the southern wall.



## THE LOOKOUT

Once the heroes make their way up the passageway on the southern side of the feeding room, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the fresh air from the opening, you hear the '**SCREEE**' of a bird close by.

You come to the edge of the opening, and realise that a small platform hangs out over the edge of the steep cliff about halfway up from the ground.

To your left is a large nest, as some winged dinosaur hatch-lings cry out for their mother.

You also notice, in the valley below, an ancient ruined fortress stands with a clean stream of fresh water running through its centre.

On a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, a hero deduces, from the piles of bird carcass in the feeding room, and the strategic positioning of this ledge, that the lizardfolk hunt pteranodon hatch-lings for one of their food sources, and this is where they hunt from.

**Note:** There is a chance for the heroes that awoke in **Area 1B: Southern Beach Awakening** to have been dropped into the pteranodon nest at the same time that this ledge is discovered within this encounter, and this may very well be the point at which some of the heroes rendezvous again.

## F. THE POOL ROOM

As the heroes approach the pool room, a pungent odor fills the air. When the PCs move into the room, they will find 3 lizardfolk cooling off in a community pool. The water is greenish and swamp-like, and small insects fly about the stench.

Unless successfully stealthing, the lizardfolk will immediately attack with their claws and bite as the heroes enter the room. They are very territorial and will fight to protect their home.

## CREATURES

3x Lizardfolk (*MM*, pg. 204)

## LOOT

The heroes will find a **Decanter of Endless Water** (*DMG*, pg. 161) laying at the bottom of the pool if checked. It seems the lizardfolk were using it to keep the water levels in their pool topped up.

## G. NESTING AREA & CONCEALED ROOM

This area is warm and the heroes will firstly notice that the room is empty of creatures. They will, however, find that there are three large eggs, about knee height, and each is sitting in the warmth of a bundle of dried grass.

The eggs are incubating and will hatch baby lizardfolk within the next **5d4 days**. If the eggs are lifted and dropped to the floor, roll a **d20** against the egg's AC to determine if dropping it has damaged the shell. They have an **AC of 15**, and a **Maximum Hit Points of 18**, once the egg has reached 0 Hit Points, the shell will break open revealing the undeveloped lizardfolk fetus inside.

## CONCEALED DOOR

At the far western side of this room, behind the three lizardfolk eggs, is a concealed passage. It is hidden by a large piece of bark pulled from a tree outside. A successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check** will notice that the piece of bark is oddly placed and that the room extends into another small area behind it. Within the small area an old pirate booty chest can be found, likely carried away from a shipwreck many years ago.

## LOOT

The chest is locked, and likely never opened by the lizardfolk; a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check** will open the chest. It holds a **Dagger (+1)**, and **50 feet of Hempen Rope**.



## H. THE LIZARD KING

As the heroes approach the exit of the lizardfolk cave lair, read or paraphrase the following:

The heavy, moldy stench to the air begins to clear, as a fresh breeze touches your skin. The opening beckons you to exit to the valley beyond.

You approach the exit and you notice large skeletal bones piled high around an open, dug-out area; they seem to be from large three horned animals. As you walk out into the centre of the three horn graveyard, a large lizardfolk monstrosity steps out from behind an enormous dinosaur skull up on the high rise. He jumps down with ease into the pit.

He wears a crown made from bone, and carries a large trident. He speaks something in a foreign language, laughs and rushes towards you.

The Lizard King does not mourn for any dead kin, as he simply sees them now as fresh meat for his next meal. He relishes the challenge of combat. Have the PCs **roll for initiative**.

### CREATURES

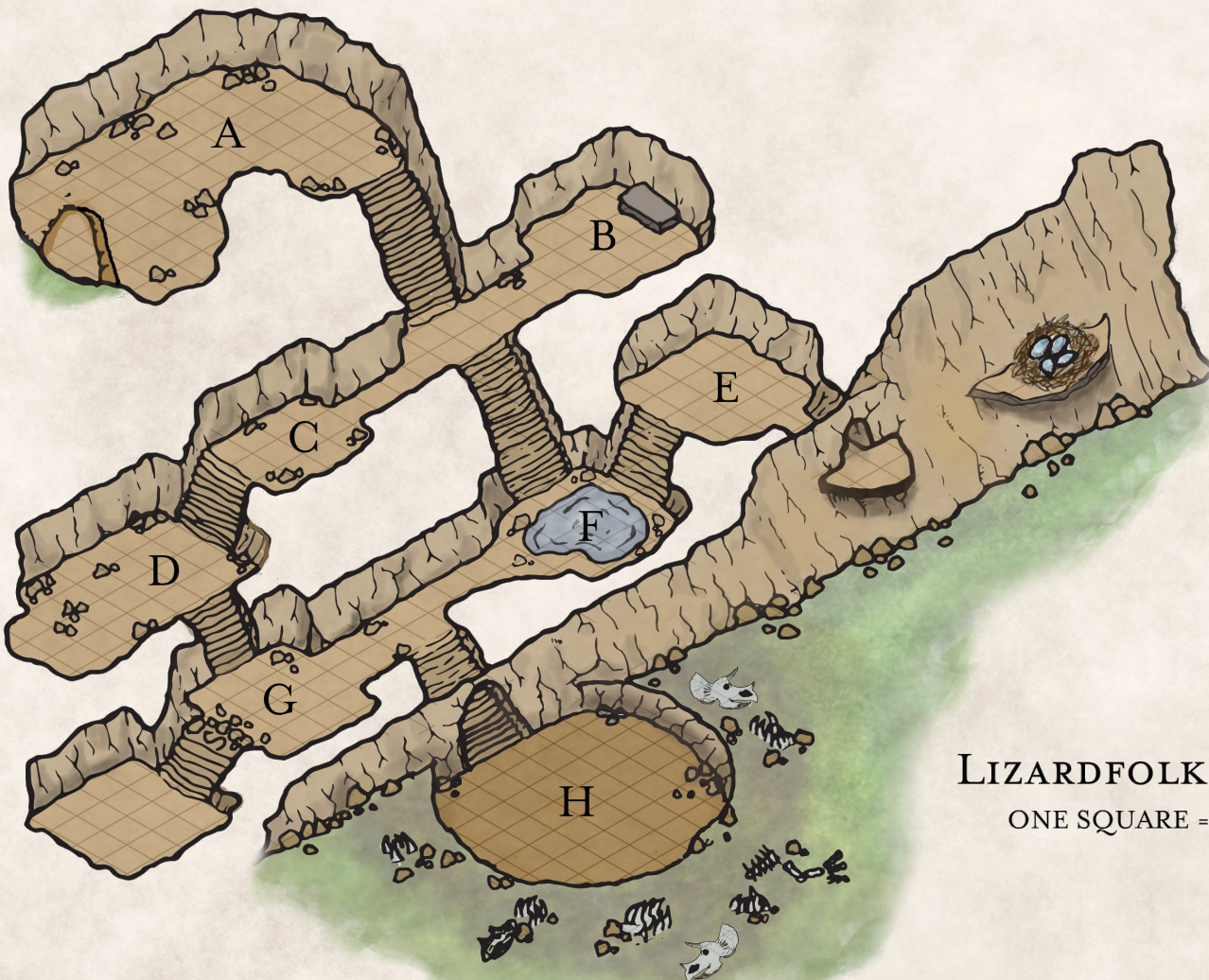
1 x Lizard King (*MM*, pg. 205)

### TACTICS

He will attack to kill, dealing as much damage as possible to the biggest of the heroes by utilising his **Skewer Feat**. The Lizard King then deals with any ranged or magic users thereafter.

### DEVELOPMENT

Once the party overcome the Lizard King, any hero who succeeds a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check**, will notice a narrow path that leads up and out of the pit. It winds through the piles of triceratops bones, and out into the valley beyond (see *Three Horn Valley, Area 16*).



## LIZARDFOLK TUNNELS

ONE SQUARE = FIVE FEET



## 15. PAKU VILLAGE

Paku village is the village of the Paku Tribe, who inhabit the western most part of the Island of Selu. Their population is less than 100, and is made mostly of tribal hunters and gatherers. Their hunters, whilst doubling as the village's militia in times of war, are not trained warriors or fighters. This is due to the fact that the island's three tribes have been at peace for as long as the eldest of the Seluian tribesman can remember.

All of that is about to change as the surviving Captain Gold-Tusk has begun to rouse the warrior tribes on the eastern side of the island, in an effort to take control of the western side of Selu. A scouting party of pirates, lead by Gold-Tusk's fearsome orcish pirate lieutenant Dorrn, makes their way from the east, through Three Horn Valley and will shortly march upon Nula Ruin, the single point of defense for the Paku Village.

**Time Passing.** The day will become evening very quickly as the heroes make their way into the village, if it is not the evening already (*see the Time Passing table in Chapter 1: Running this Adventure*). Remember; if the heroes do not eat food and drink some water at least once per day, they will gain 1 level of **Exhaustion (PHB, pg. 291)** each evening of the foodless/drinkless day.

As the heroes approach Paku Village, read or paraphrase the following (you may want to improvise a little if a guide has lead them there):

The evening truly sets in as the darkness envelopes the land. You approach the tribal village as a large bonfire roars at its inner circle, casting a flickering orange hue across the many crudely made huts and clay structures.

There is no one to be seen but murmuring voices can be heard coming from the larger clay building to the east of the village.

The voices can be heard coming from the Community Hall (*see Dire News from the East, Area 15A*).

### 15A. DIRE NEWS FROM THE EAST

Normally this hall is empty, however the first time that the heroes enter Paku Village, the community hall will be teeming with people. The entire Paku Tribe, it seems, is crammed into the hall.

The Paku tribe is holding an emergency gathering to discuss the invasion threat marching towards the village from the only passage east, via **Three Horn Valley (Area 16)**. A stranger riding a 'tamed' behir has brought word of this as warning. This stranger is none other than Raven, the elf who accompanied them on their ship voyage.

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes approach the gathering at the community hall:

You approach the hall as the voices murmur in worry. You can see easily into the cramped space within, and notice immediately the worrying, and questioning looks that the tribes-people cast each other.

You can see that one man sits in a throne made from what looks to be the bones of some large creature. He wears tribal warpaint, a sharp claw from some long dead dinosaur is pierced below his bottom lip, and long, heavy dreadlocks fall around his muscular shoulders and bare chest. He raises his fist and the room becomes quiet.

He begins to talk in broken common **'Tribesmen, family. Me Chief Cargoth call you here with regret. Terror comes Paku's way from east! Evil strangers from distant land come to take our home! New friend here...'** at this he motions to the slender form in the shadowy corner **'...comes to warn Paku tribe. Paku hunters must prepare to defend Paku Village by manning Nula Ruin, enemy comes by way of Three Horn Valley tonight!'**

With this, the slender figure steps forth from the shadows, it is Raven, the elven girl that accompanied you on the ship voyage not so long ago. She catches sight of you and your companions, she smiles in acknowledgment before slipping out of the back door as the crowd begin to chatter and murmur loudly in worry.



At this point, allow the PCs to talk amongst themselves, or even decide to take an action, if desired. Depending on their actions, the following boxed text may need improvisation.

After a few moments, read or paraphrase the following:

**'Go now, and begin to prepare, we go, one hour!'**  
Chief Cargoth orders as he rises to make his way out of the hall.

Before you can make any other action; Raven appears at your side **'Shhh'** she presses her finger to her lips **'come, we don't have much time and your help is required!'** she whispers, and turns to lead you away from the tribes-people.

## 15B. A RAVEN REUNION

### WHAT RAVEN KNOWS

#### Information

There are 30 pirates, including their Orcish Lieutenant, and a human magic user, that are moving west through the valley. They are made up of a mixture of orcs, humans, and a few halflings. They all look like brutes and fighters, and they come heavily armed with melee weapons and bows. They also have at least 1 velociraptor that their magic user seems to have been able to tame; it travels with, and hunts for them.

The Paku archers are of about 30 men, and will be positioned at higher vantage points in the cliffs and tall trees within the valley that are en rout to the Nula Ruin. They hope to thin the enemies forces before the battle meets at the ruins.

The Nula Ruin, sitting in the middle of the valley that separates the west from the east, is an ancient guard post for the western side of the island. This was once used, in ancient times, as a defensive post in times of war, for protection against any foe marching from the east.

Three Horn Valley is the valley to the east of Paku Village, and is the only main passage through the mountains that separate the western side of Selu from the east. It earned its name, Three Horn Valley, due to the triceratops graveyard located at the mouth of the valley, between Paku Village and Nula Ruin.

The island is known as the Island of Selu, and has been secluded in mysterious fog for a very long time, now forgotten by the world. No one, however, has been able to tell Raven, in her brief talk with the Paku witch doctor, or Chief Cargoth, how or why the island came to be hidden as such, how one might leave the island, or how the Paku came to know Common.

**Raven's time on the island.** She will tell her story emphatically about how she woke in the midst of the pirate shipwreck to the north of the island. Overheard their plans to scout the west of the island, through the central valley, and take over and enslave the first town that they come across to make as their base of operations. They march from the east now, through the valley, and will approach Nula Ruin this night. She ran into the jungle and came upon a Behir, which she tamed using her divine ranger magic. She then rode the behir west, to find the first populated settlement to warn them of the danger that approaches from the east. She found the Paku tribe.

The heroes are lead to a small outcropping in the jungle on the edge of the village. Here Raven will tell them of her story since the shipwreck, including the knowledge of the current threat from the east. She will then allow the PCs to ask any question that they wish, she will answer as much as she can based on the ***What Raven Knows table*** below.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Raven leads you away from the tribe preparing its hunters for battle, to a small outcropping.

She stops and turns, bright eyed and energetic **'I cannot believe that you are here! Alive!'** she smiles brightly.

She continues **'and lucky too, the pirates begin their invasion from the east through the valley over yonder; your skills will be much appreciated! The fate of the Paku Tribe may depend on it!'**



Use **What Raven Knows table** above as a source of inspiration when role-playing her as an NPC. If the conversation leads to something that is not covered in the table above, improvise to the best of your ability and make the character your own.

If the heroes hesitate in accepting the quest to help the Paku, read or paraphrase the following:

**'Well, it is with all of the luck of Tymora that we meet here, on the verge of battle! Or was it something more than luck I wonder? In any case, you must join up to help protect these people. They are not warriors, but simple hunters and gatherers. You must join me in manning Nula Ruin whilst the Paku archers take their posts in the valley's wilderness vantage points. What say you?'**

Once the heroes have finished talking to Raven, she will offer to introduce them to Chief Corgoth, and receive replenishments in food and water at **Paku Meal Hall (Area 15C)**. If they do not wish to do so, jump straight to **Three Horn Valley (Area 16)**.

### 15C. PAKU MEAL HALL

As Raven escorts the heroes to the Paku meal hall, read or paraphrase the following:

Raven leads you through the clay huts, over to another large hall. Inside a fire blazes in the south-eastern corner; atop a pot of stew is bubbling away. Clay basins of drinking water and clay cups sit on a large stone slab along the eastern wall.

A long and crude wooden table stretches the length of the hall, where hunters and gathers are eating prior to leaving for battle.

Chief Corgoth stands to the north-west corner silently smearing fresh warpaint across his cheeks and forehead. He looks up at you with immediate aggression as you enter the hall, only to relax a little when he notices Raven is escorting you.

Raven strides confidently up to Chief Corgoth and says **'these are friends, here to help with the battle, they will stand and fight at Nula Ruin with you and me, oh courageous and fearsome chief.'**

Allow the heroes the chance to role-play and engage with Chief Corgoth. At first he will be short with his replies, in broken common, but proud in his stance. He honors courage and strength, and if the heroes show traits of this to him, he will warm to them immediately. If they do not show traits of courage and strength, Corgoth will remain short and cold with the heroes. Either way he will motion to the food and water in acceptance of their help, then turn to go back to his preparation once the conversation has ceased.

After an hour the chief will call for the Paku hunters, Raven, and the PCs to rise and set off to move east into **Three Horn Valley (Area 16)**.

**Note:** Allowing the heroes to consume food and drink here will stop any onset of **Exhaustion** (see **Chapter 1: Running this Adventure**).

## 16. THREE HORN VALLEY

There are two different encounters that can be run in Three Horn Valley, and it depends on the time that the heroes enter the valley as to which encounter you should run:

- One is designed for when the heroes enter the valley before the Paku hunters leave their village to protect the Nula Ruins.
- The second is for after the Paku hunters have left the village.

Run either of the encounters below depending on the timing of the scene:

### 16A. BEFORE AREA 15 (PAKU VILLAGE)

The heroes may enter Three Horn Valley via multiple encounters within this adventure. In each case they will be met as they enter the valley, by a group of three Paku hunters who are patrolling the area after news that a threat looms from the east. The Paku hunters are immediately suspicious of the heroes, stopping them at spear-point and taking them into custody. They will attempt to move the heroes back to Paku Village to be interrogated there. A successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** will convince them that the heroes are not a threat, and they will treat the heroes friendly from that



point forward, inviting and leading them to ***Paku Village (Area 15)***.

As the heroes walk through Three Horn Valley, read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk through the valley, steep mountainous cliffs breach the earth and stretch skyward. Before long you start to see massive corpses and skeletons of huge three horned dinosaurs littered about the place. It seems that this place is a final resting place for the majestic beasts. A graveyard of sorts.

Once the heroes begin to approach Area 15 as shown on the ***Dungeon Master's Map of the Lost Island of Selu (Appendix B)***; jump straight to ***Paku Village (Area 15)***.

#### 16B. AFTER AREA 15 (PAKU VILLAGE)

If the heroes enter Three Horn Valley after the Paku hunters have left the village to take up position in preparation for the battle at Nula Ruin, read or paraphrase the following:

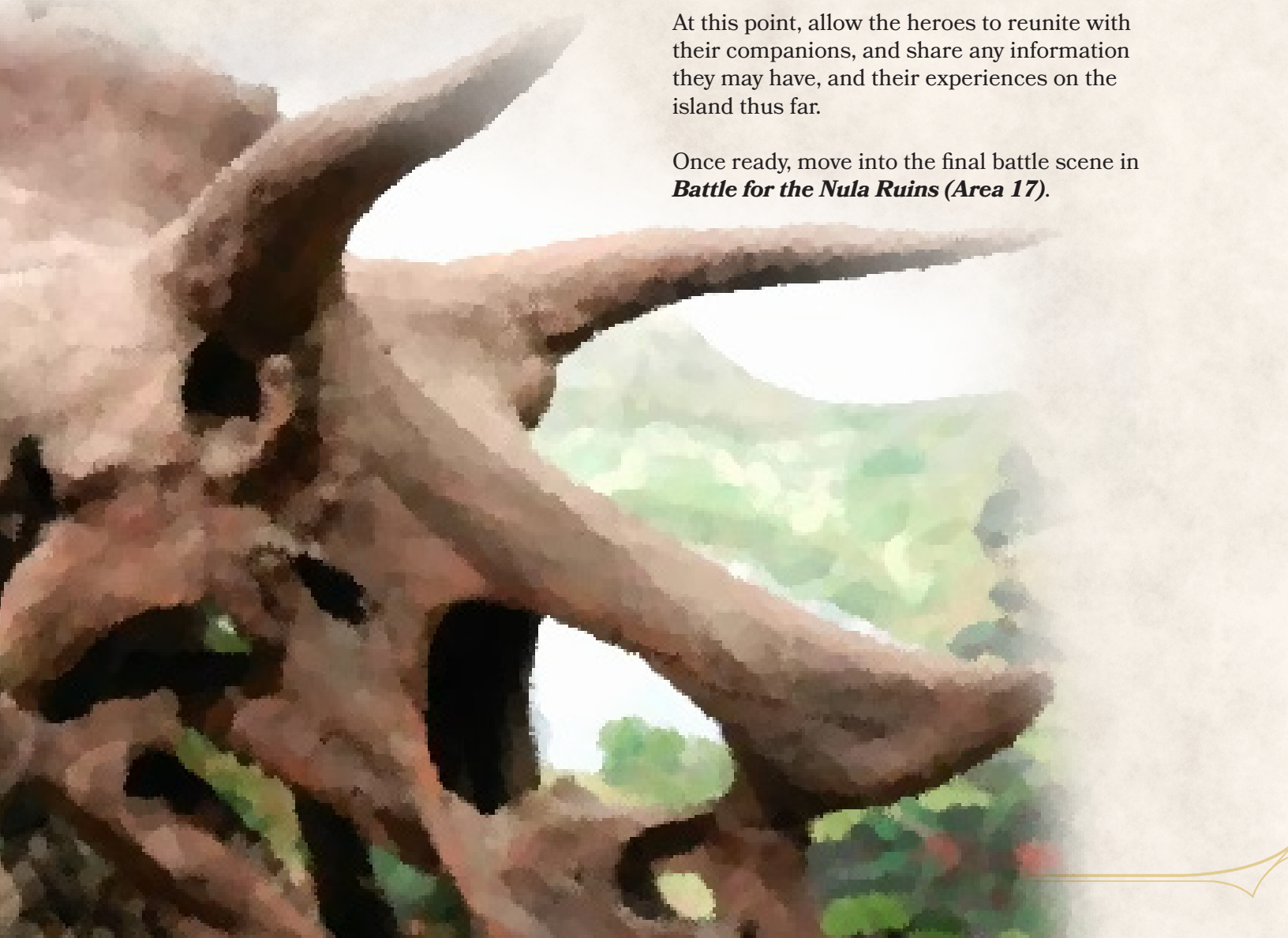
As you walk into the valley, you are met by a group of tribes-people armed with long bows and throwing spears. They have war paint smeared all over their bare bodies, with each only adorning a small loin cloth around their waist.

Then you see them, your lost companions. It seems that they were not lost at sea, but also here roaming the island.

They travel with a group of around 30 tribes-people, who are obviously dressed for battle. They are lead by a huge man, with thick and long dreadlocks draping over his muscular barrel chest. He wears a crown made from the bones of some long dead creature.

At this point, allow the heroes to reunite with their companions, and share any information they may have, and their experiences on the island thus far.

Once ready, move into the final battle scene in ***Battle for the Nula Ruins (Area 17)***.





## 17. BATTLE FOR NULA RUINS

Nula Ruins were once a mighty stronghold, protecting the only major passage through to the west of the Island of Selu from the east. In ancient times of war, the Paku tribe, then a thriving community with thousands of warriors, would man the fortress to protect the Paku from invading armies. The fortress never fell, and the Paku survived through to times of peace, for which the island has seen for countless years. Over time, the fortress, being left unused and unkempt, began to erode and fell to ruin, a state in which it has been for many generations. It seems now, that Nula Ruins must reignite its former glory and protect the Paku once more.

As the heroes and the Paku hunters approach the Nula Ruins (within 500 feet; 1 hex), read or paraphrase the following:

You walk through the valley of three horned skeletons, finally seeing large stone walls rising up from the craggy ground from out of the night's darkness.

Now open and inviting, these tall but broken walls and open archways once held back any oncoming forces. Vines and shrubbery now grow through the corroding blocks of stone.

Once the heroes decide to move into the Nula Ruins, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the main western entrance of the crumbling fortress, Chief Cargoth motions to two of his head hunters to move their forces into position. One half of the hunter group heads to the southern edges of the valley, the other to the north. Both disappear around the side of Nula Ruins.

Left behind with your party is Raven, mounted on her behir, four hunter archers, and Chief Cargoth, who looks over to you and states '**We man fortress, hunters man valley high spots and some fortress high spots. Job for you; stop enemy coming into fortress. Job for hunters; make less enemy before they get to fortress.**'

He then leads the way into the ruins.

Allow the PCs to position themselves around the battle map provided.

Once the heroes are inside and relatively positioned on the battle map, read or paraphrase the following (if their view is blocked to the east, they will hear this rather than see it):

Two archers position themselves on each of the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of the Nula Ruins. You hear a birds cry, and Chief Cargoth looks to you '**they come**' as he motions out to the east.

You see many lit torches making their way through the dark valley, then a snap of a bow splits the silence, then another, and another after that. You hear cries of pain and sudden panic as the torches begin to fall to the floor. You can see the enemy begin to come into view as they rush for cover.

Suddenly cries begin to come from the hunter's vantage points, and screeches of viscous beasts cry out in blood-lust.

Only a few enemy survive the initial surprise attack. You notice a large three horned beast charging up to the fortress; an orcish pirate rides on its back shielded by the beast's bony and arrow riddled frill. Three of his men dodge their way through the arrows and enter the Nula Ruins below you.

Following shortly after, four speeding dark shapes, with whip like tails and screeching with hunger enter the ruins.

The orcish pirate is none other than **Dorrñn**, the pirate lieutenant, and three of his **Pirate** men. Dorrñn is mounted upon a **Triceratops** and will dismount once in the battle area. Following them are four **Velociraptors**. All five of the dinosaurs have been magically charmed by the pirate magic user to fight along side them. They will enter the main circle and attack.

**Roll initiative.**



## CREATURES

1 x Dorrn (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*).

3 x Pirates (*Bandits; MM, pg. 343*).

4 x Velociraptors (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*).

1 x Chief Cargoth (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*).

4 x Paku Archers (*Scout; MM, pg. 349*) with **5 Hit Points** each, only carry longbows.

1 x Raven (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*) mounted on her Behir (*MM, pg. 25*).

1 x Triceratops (*Appendix A: NPCs and Monsters*).

## TACTICS

The **Pirates** will rush up the ancient stairs to attack immediately with their scimitars.

The **Velociraptors** will head directly for the four archers at Dorrn's command.

The **Triceratops** will utilise its **Trampling Charge** feat to run into the walls of the Nula Ruins. Each time it hits a wall, any hero standing on that particular partition must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**. Any creature that fails the save will fall prone until their next turn. **It will not attack any heroes actively.**

**Raven** will ride her behir around the walls of the inner circle of Nula Ruins, and attack from range with her Paku longbow. **The behir is purely a mount for Raven, and will not use its attack actions.**

The **Paku Archers** will attempt to fire arrows at the velociraptors before they reach them.

**Chief Cargoth** rushes at Dorrn to melee range and attacks with his warhammer.

**Dorrn** gets within 60 feet of Chief Cargoth, and attacks at range with his trident throw. He will utilise his **Retrieve Trident** feat as a bonus action to retrieve it. He will then fight in melee once within range with his handaxe.

## DEVELOPMENT

Once the battle is complete, skip ahead to **Chapter 4: Epilogue** to complete the adventure.

### ADJUSTING ENCOUNTER FOR 4TH LEVEL

To increase the difficulty of this final encounter to cater for a group of 4th level (APL) characters, make the following changes:

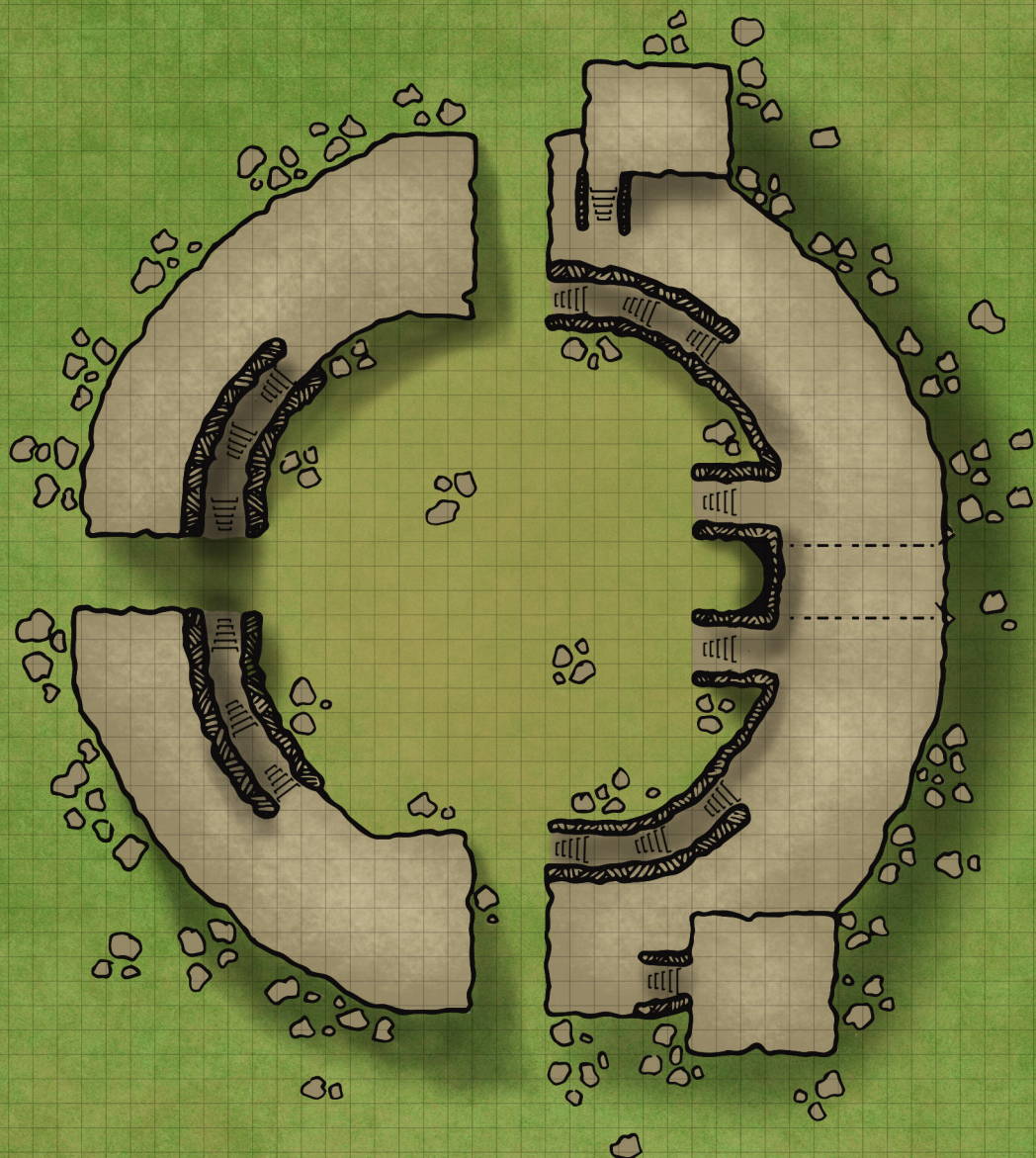
- Add 1x **Allosaurus** (*MM, pg. 79*)

### TACTICS

The Allosaurus will enter the central area of the Nula Ruins and:

1. Firstly attack the closest ranged fighting PC.
2. Secondly it will chase and attack Raven and the Behir.
3. Finally, once all ranged opponents are depleted, the Allosaurus will attack the closest melee fighting PC.





NULA RUINS  
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



## CHAPTER 4: EPILOGUE

The epilogue is a great way to close off any loose ends that may be left over in the story. This can include such things as:

- Were there any other pirates following Dorrn?
- Whatever happened to the pirate ship 'The Black Spectre'?
- What happens if Chief Cargoth dies during the battle of Nula Ruins?

Read or paraphrase the following epilogue:

The battle ends as the night draws on, and before long the sun begins to rise. Finally, after long hours of silence, the surviving Paku hunters begin to trickle back into the Nula Ruins beaten, slashed and bloodied. Of the 32 that had left the Paku Village the night before, only 20 will return this day; their dead having died with honor.

After tending to wounds and resting tired bodies, a group of hunters, lead by Raven and her behir, are sent out to scout to the east. They later return with news that the abandoned pirate ship, 'The Black Spectre', is not as wrecked as one might first think, and Raven believes it may be salvaged.

They also report that the pirate forces have moved to the far east of the island, beyond the volcano, the fire, and the ash. They seem to have allied with the two eastern, more savage tribes. They, however, do not look to be marching to invade any time soon, and the Paku Tribe seem to be safe for now.

Who knows what the next day or two will bring but if it's anything like the past two days, it will be interesting, and that's for sure.

With the Black Spectre there for the taking, you now have an opportunity to seize the ship and leave island for good, but who knows what fate will fall over the Paku tribe once you depart, now that war has begun on the Lost Island of Selu!

## WHAT'S NEXT?

*Struggle in Three Horn Valley* is intentionally left open with a couple of options for the players. They may wish stay and fight the war for glory and righteousness, or they may wish to capture The Black Spectre for their own and escape the island to return to their original campaign story arcs.

If they do, indeed, wish to escape the island on The Black Spectre, a full multi level map of the pirate galley ship has been included in this adventure's appendices for their further adventuring purposes.

If your players decide to stay on the Island of Selu to fight in the oncoming war, the next adventure in this series, *'Dinos of Darkness'*, will delve deeper into the Island of Selu and the war that beckons.

If you and your group are eager to press on with the adventure before *'Dinos of Darkness'* is released, here are some suggestions of what you may wish to include going forward:

- The pirate, Captain Korugk Gold-Tusk, has allied the two warring eastern tribes, the Kagu, and the Narup tribes. He plans to use their warriors as an army to overrun the island and take it for his own.
- The pirate's spellcaster (*Mage; MM, pg. 347*) has magically charmed the more viscous, and larger carnivore dinosaurs. They now command the allied eastern tribes, and also a large contingent of dinosaur mounted forces.
- Raven begins to work her magic on training the herbivore dinosaurs on the western side of the island to help the heroes and the Paku tribe in an effort to level the war. Harnesses are made, some attached with ballista possibly salvaged from The Black Spectre, others with large, and sharp mounted lances.
- The war climaxes in a battle between the two sides; heroes versus pirates, west versus east, and herbivore dinosaur riders versus carnivore dinosaur riders.



## APPENDIX A: NPCs AND MONSTERS

This appendix contains statistics for new NPCs and monsters that appear in this adventure.

### WYATT THREETOOTH

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Wyatt was a deckhand aboard The Black Spectre. He resented being at the bottom of the food chain in the pirate crew. He was picked on, spat on and made to do the jobs that no one else wanted to do. It was fair to say that Wyatt had some serious reservations about signing up to begin with. Now this; being marooned on a lost island with vicious dinosaurs. He didn't need this, and he had decided, just recently that he just wasn't cut out for being a pirate.

**Role-playing Wyatt.** The ex-pirate is about as wise as a rat, in saying that if there is a situation where Wyatt is forced to make a decision, he will make the wrong choice 90% of the time. He also has a bad habit of calling out 'YARRRR' in a pirate accent at the most inappropriate times.



### DORRGN (ORC), PIRATE LIEUTENANT

*Medium humanoid (orc), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 80 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidation +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the Dorrn can move up to his total speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

**Retrieve Trident.** Dorrn's trident has a length of rope attached to it at one end, and tied off around his wrist at the other end. As a bonus action Dorrn can pull back with the rope, and on a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** can retrieve his thrown trident, back into his possession.

#### ACTIONS

**Trident.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage when held with two hands and used to make a melee attack.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.



## RAVEN

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 17 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 30 ft, mounted 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10(+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Perception +6

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Archer's Eye.** (3/Day). As a bonus action, Raven can add 1d10 to her next attack or damage roll with a longbow or shortbow.

**Mounted Melee Advantage.** Whilst mounted on her behir, Raven has advantage on melee attack rolls against any unmounted creature that is smaller than the mount.

**Spellcasting.** Raven is a 2nd-level ranger spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Raven has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (3 slots): *Animal Friendship*, *Beast Bond*, *Speak with Animals*

### ACTIONS

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.







## CAPTAIN KORUGK GOLD-TUSK

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 102 (12d10 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

<b>STR</b>	<b>DEX</b>	<b>CON</b>	<b>INT</b>	<b>WIS</b>	<b>CHA</b>
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Intimidation +3, Animal Handling +4, Perception +4, Survival +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14, darkvision 60 ft.

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the Dorrgrn can move up to his total speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

**Great Weapon Fighting.** Captain Gold-tusk can reroll 1's and 2's on two-handed melee weapon damage dice.

**Spellcasting.** Captain Gold-tusk is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *Shape Water*, *Shocking Grasp*

1st level (5 slots): *Shield*

2nd level (4 slots): *Blur*, *Gust of Wind*

3rd level (3 slots): *Fear*, *Hypnotic Pattern*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Captain Gold-tusk makes three melee attacks; two with his glaive, and one with his spiked boot

**Glaive (two handed).** *Melee Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.

**Spiked Boot.** *Melee Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage and target is pushed back 5 feet.

## CHIEF CARGOTH (OF THE PAKU TRIBE)

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

**Armor Class** 14 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

<b>STR</b>	<b>DEX</b>	<b>CON</b>	<b>INT</b>	<b>WIS</b>	<b>CHA</b>
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Intimidation +3

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Paku

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** Chief Cargoth has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated..

**Paku Haka.** Chief Cargoth can spend 10 minutes inspiring his companions with a brutal tribal war-cry/dance, igniting a warrior's rage within them and will up their resolve to fight. When he does so, choose up to six friendly creatures (which can include himself) within 30 feet of Chief Cargoth who can see or hear him. Each creature can gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + Chief Cargoth's Charisma modifier. A creature can't gain temporary hit points from this feat again until it has finished a short or long rest..

### ACTIONS

**Warhammer +1 (two handed).** *Melee Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 3 + 1) bludgeoning damage.





# DINOSAURS

## LARGE PTERANODON MOTHER

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (6d8)

**Speed** 10ft., fly 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +1

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Flyby.** The pteranodon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## PTERANODON HATCH-LING

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 8 (1d8)

**Speed** 10ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+3)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +0

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The baby pteranodon has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the pteranodon's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 5 (2d4) piercing damage.

## VELOCIRAPTOR (SELUIAN)

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 23 (3d10 + 6)

**Speed** 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Pounce.** If the velociraptor moves at least 30 feet straight toward a creature and then hits with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a **DC 11 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone. If target is prone, the velociraptor can make one bite attack as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

## TRICERATOPS

*Huge beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 95 (10d12 + 30)

**Speed** 50ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Trampling Charge.** If the triceratops moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the triceratops can stomp attack it as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 24 (4d8 + 6) piercing damage.

**Stomp.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage



## APPENDIX B: THE LOST ISLAND OF SELU

### DM's MAP

# The Lost Island of Selu



### LEGEND

- |    |                            |     |                       |
|----|----------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 1. | Starting Locations (A & B) | 10. | The Jungles of Selu   |
| 2. | Pirate Encampment          | 11. | Pteranodon Bay        |
| 3. | Plains of the Triceratops  | 12. | For Gricks Sake       |
| 4. | Dead-end Mountains         | 13. | Cargo Shipwreck       |
| 5. | The Pteranodon Nest        | 14. | Lizardfolk Tunnels    |
| 6. | A Cliff with a View        | 15. | Paku Village          |
| 7. | The Foothills              | 16. | Three Horn Valley     |
| 8. | Raptor Pass                | 17. | Battle for Nula Ruins |
| 9. | The Maelstrom              |     |                       |



# APPENDIX C: THE LOST ISLAND OF SELU

## PLAYER'S MAP

### The Lost Island of Selu

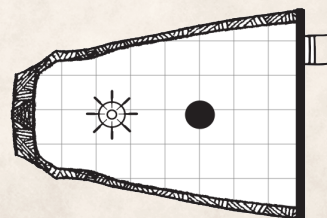




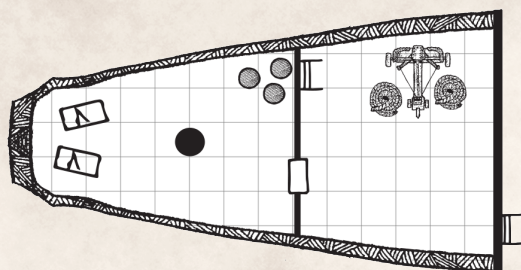
# APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL MAPS

## THE BLACK SPECTRE

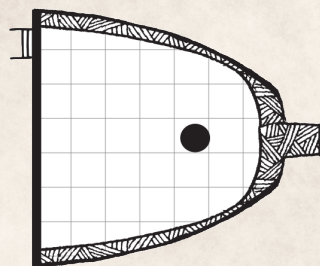
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



POOP DECK



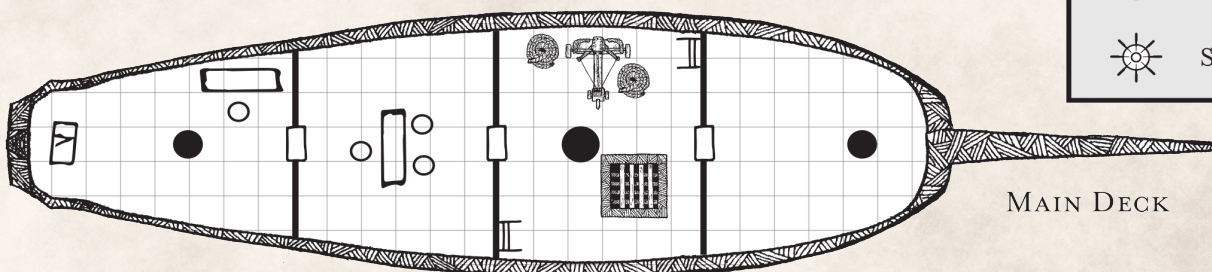
QUARTERDECK



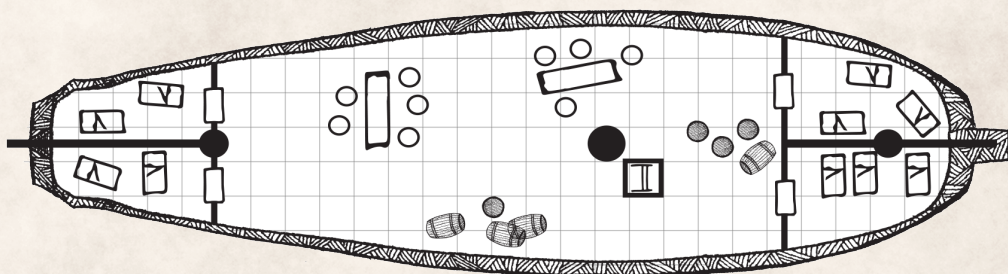
FORECASTLE

KEY

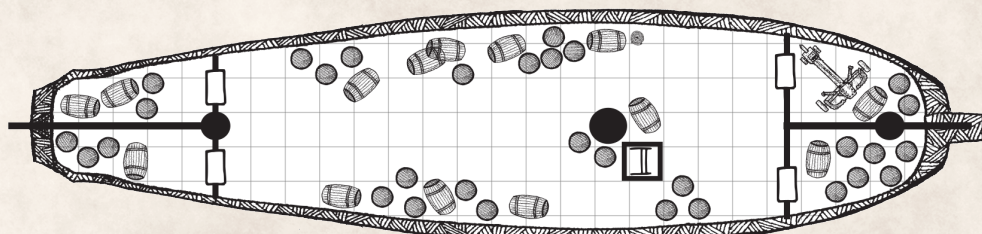
	BALLISTA & ROPE
	CARGO HATCH
	BARRELS & CRATES
	TABLE/DESK & CHAIRS
	DOOR
	BUNK
	LADDER
	MASTS
	SHIP'S WHEEL



MAIN DECK



ORLOP DECK



CARGO HOLD



# OTHER TITLES

## BY

# P.B. PUBLISHING

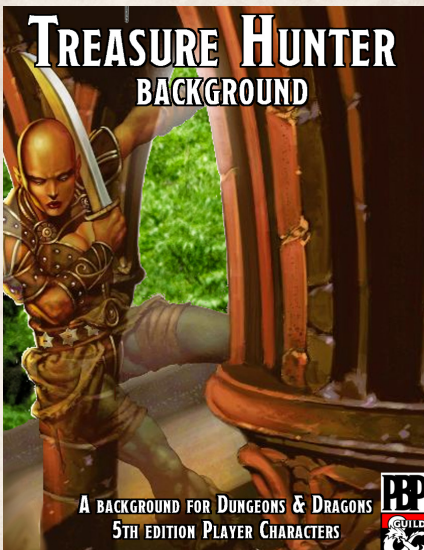
<http://bit.ly/2ncOC46>



“My players were afraid to enter a room, but also excited!”

“This is truly awesome. Well Done!”

<http://bit.ly/2nvtzsZ>



“A really flavorful background that does a great job of channeling the Indiana Jones archetype...”

<http://bit.ly/2nkORue>



“In my opinion, this is the best take of a witch class for 5e...”

<http://bit.ly/2nEcAVw>



“Nicely done! This is a great murder mystery that introduces a new Forgotten Realms town...”



# STRUGGLE IN THREE HORN VALLEY

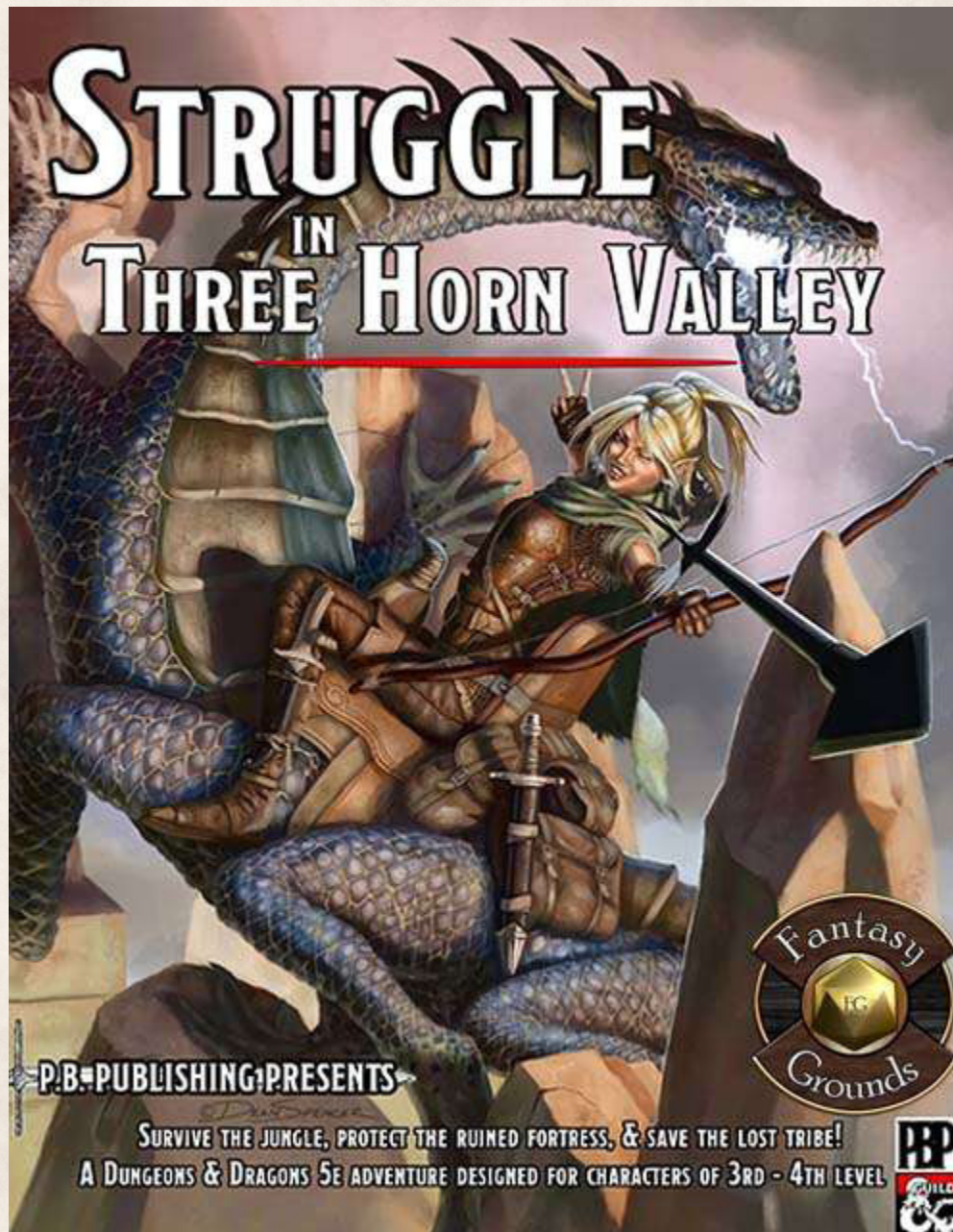
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The background of the advertisement is a dramatic illustration of a large red dragon breathing fire at a knight in armor. The dragon is on the left, its head and wings dominating the upper half of the frame. The knight is on the right, standing on a rocky outcrop and facing the dragon. The scene is filled with fire and smoke, creating a sense of intense battle. The D&D logo is at the top center, and the title 'BASIC RULES' is in large white letters with a black outline. A red horizontal line is below the title. At the bottom, there is a red banner with the text 'DOWNLOAD NOW' and a small copyright notice.

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# BEHIND THE SCREEN: GREYHAWK

## Behind the Screen

*Behind the Screen* offers Dungeon Masters tips, tricks, resources, and ideas as further creative fuel for your gaming. In this installment, we look back at one of the game's earliest campaign settings—Greyhawk.

John Roy and Luke Gygax

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*While Greyhawk is mentioned as an option in fifth edition D&D sourcebooks, we wanted to further elaborate on the setting for DMs looking to include it in their games. In so doing, we're also looking to advance the conversation of DMs creating and customizing campaign settings generally.*

*We hope you enjoy this look back at Greyhawk, and for those DMs interested in exploring more of it in their campaigns, this article includes a list of suitable resources available at the DMs Guild.*

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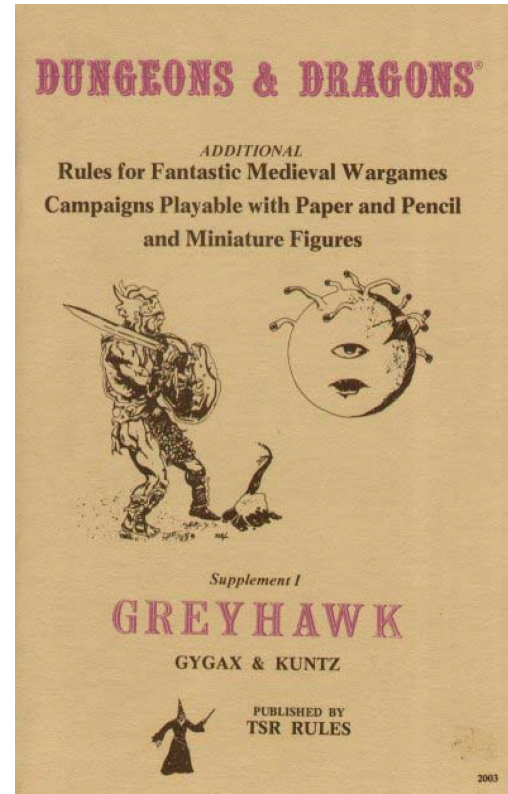
**T**he clear, accessible rule set created for the fifth edition of Dungeons & Dragons has wowed old-school gamers and attracted a host of new players. Those devouring the sourcebooks for



the first time have been treated to some tantalizing references that date back to the game's history. One setting in particular has cropped up time after time: Greyhawk.

The world of Greyhawk was the first setting published for Dungeons & Dragons (Blackmoor may have originated earlier, but would not see official publication until the game's second supplement). It has a personal connection for Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, the game's creators, as Gygax's own campaign was based there.

As the Dungeon Master, Gygax invited his friends to brave the deadly ruins of Castle Greyhawk. Long before Undermountain's sprawling caverns tempted adventurers, this was the original mega-dungeon. The castle was built hundreds of years prior by the insane wizard Zagyg. Underneath its crumbling walls lay dozens of levels crammed with death traps and murderous monsters. When Gygax wanted a break from running the game, his friend Rob Kuntz took over the DM's chair. Gygax was then free to explore the depths himself with his wizard **Mordenkainen**.

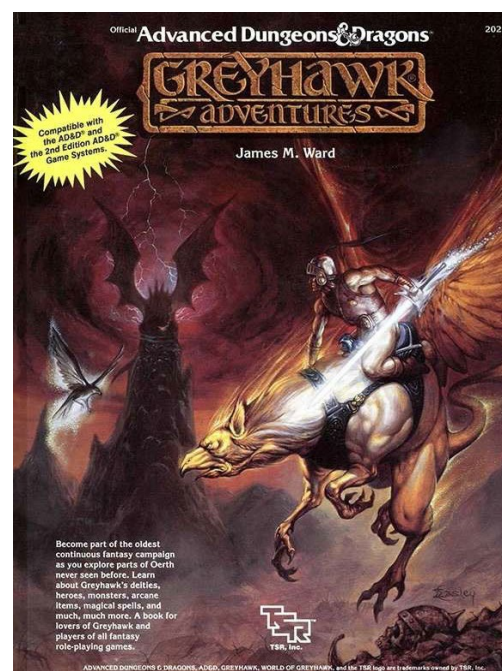


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## Hidden Gems

Fifth edition gamers have seen snatches of this world in the modern day sourcebooks. The mysterious word Greyhawk appears early in the *Players' Handbook* as they're contemplating their characters (alongside Dark Sun, Mystara, and Eberron). In Appendix B they

learn that Greyhawk is home to dozens of deities, with unfamiliar names like Hextor and Trithereon and different symbols and domains. One clue to the nature of Greyhawk is that its pantheon has four different gods of death.

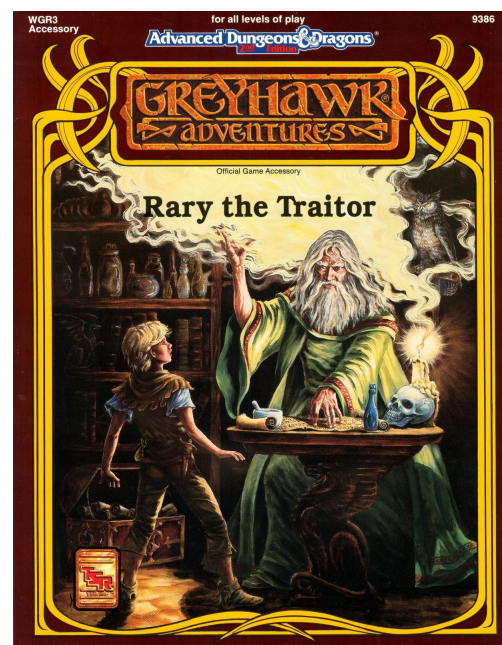


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Page sixty-eight of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* reveals more: “On Oerth (the sword-and-sorcery world of the Greyhawk setting) heroes such as Bigby and Mordenkainen are driven by greed or ambition. The hub of the region called the Flanaess is the Free City of Greyhawk, a city of scoundrels and archmagi, rife with adventure. An evil demigod, Iuz, rules a nightmarish realm in the north, threatening all of civilization.”

The list of ten “flavors of fantasy” within the *Dungeon Master's Guide* set the tone of Greyhawk campaigns beyond the usual heroic fantasy of the Forgotten Realms. Its take on sword-and-sorcery promises “a dark, gritty world... where the protagonists are motivated more by greed and self-interest than by altruistic virtue.”

A picture begins to form of a land dominated by a vast city filled with disreputable and dangerous people, all living in mortal peril of



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an unspeakable power. The promise of such a place sets the scene for a thrilling evening of roleplaying.

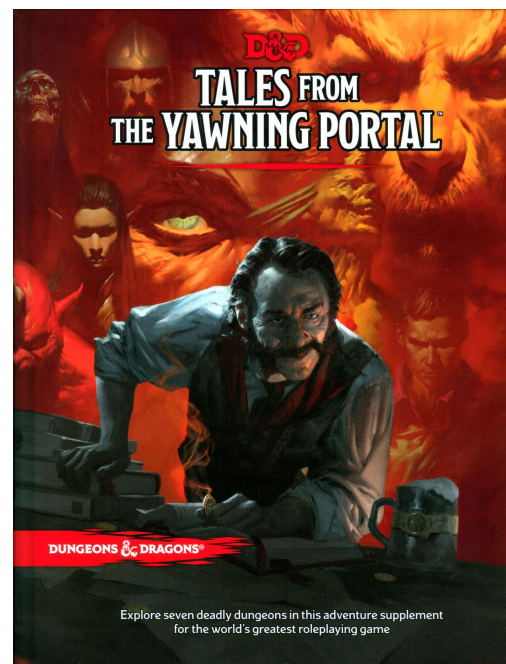
## The Dark Side

Greyhawk was dark and gritty from the start. Anyone who has played through classic D&D adventures—many of which were remastered for fifth edition in *Tales of The Yawning Portal*—knows Gygax liked his dungeons *hard*, with the constant possibility of death for the player characters. Not only could he be merciless as a Dungeon Master, many of his players' characters (such as Rob Kuntz's Lord Robilar) were of evil alignment. They carved through the dungeon's denizens without concern for right or wrong.

Mordenkainen himself was neutral, but was as ruthless in the beginning as he appears in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. His first published description from 1980 makes clear he will “utilize whatever resources are necessary,” and “his methods are often harsh.” Some good-aligned characters (such as Ernie Gygax's wizard Tenser) did venture through Zagyg's labyrinth but they weren't trying to save the world.

The original explorers of Castle Greyhawk sought treasure and objects of magical power. They used their hard-won wealth to hire servants and build strongholds like Mordenkainen's Citadel. The Free City of Greyhawk expanded around them as clever thieves and dishonest merchants attempted to profit off the adventurers' loot.

These were some of the first Dungeons & Dragons sessions ever played and the characters who plundered Castle Greyhawk remain integral to the game. Their spells, such as *Bigby's Hand* and *Tenser's Floating Disc*, grace every edition of the *Player's Handbook*. The monsters Gygax conceived to attack them, including the owlbear, the



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beholder, and the purple worm, are still the game's essential adversaries. When you step into the world of Greyhawk, you are encountering the core concepts of almost 45 years of D&D history.

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## Know thy Melf

"I created both *Melf's minute meteors* and *Melf's acid arrow* while playing with my dad in Greyhawk," Luke Gygax tells *Dragon+*. "My character Melf was exploring the dungeons below the castle mostly solo because my brother Ernie had moved out of the house and my sisters had other interests as teenagers.

"My inspiration for *Melf's acid arrow* was to be able to hit a spellcaster at range and cause a small amount of continuous damage. In first edition a caster can't concentrate to throw a spell if they take damage. So I wanted my elven fighter/magic user to be able to enchant his arrows to carry acid so when they struck a spell caster the target would suffer damage for a few rounds and I could buy some time to slay the henchmen without getting waylaid with spells from their leader.

"*Melf's minute meteors* came after I achieved fifth level and learned *fireball*. I encountered some ogres in a thirty-by-thirty room and I was so excited that I immediately cast *fireball* thinking I was at a safe distance from the blast. I learned about volume that day. The ceiling was only fifteen feet high and the *fireball* came back through the doorway and hit me too!

"I decided I wanted a spell that would cast smaller *fireballs* to cause plenty of damage but without the risk of damaging myself or my magic items! On each occasion Melf spent time and money researching the spell and I worked with my dad to write it up. So these spells are truly born from adventuring in the original setting of Greyhawk."

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## Greyhawk Unleashed

Monsters and spells from the campaign began to appear in print with the 1974 supplement *Greyhawk*, written by Gary Gygax and Robert J. Kuntz. In 1980, Gygax fleshed out the setting and published a



larger version . Dozens of supplements followed, adding detail and depth to his ideas. Over three decades, authors such as Douglas Niles, Carl Sargent, and Erik Mona populated the world with hundreds of new characters, while still seeking to preserve its grim, deadly atmosphere. In fifth edition the world of Greyhawk is alive and well, open to anyone with the courage to take their first steps on Oerth.



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Greyhawk gets its name from the grey-colored hawks which are native to the main city. No matter the origin, the word “grey” fits the setting well. This is no morally simplistic world where the good guys always win. “Gygax was enough of a student of history to understand that relations between kingdoms are rarely black and white, and that even nominally good-aligned realms can have rivalries and conflicts,” says Mike Mearls, Franchise Creative Director for D&D and a big fan of the world of Greyhawk. It’s a perfect setting for fans of the kind of ethically conflicted characters seen in the works of Joe Abercrombie or George R.R. Martin.

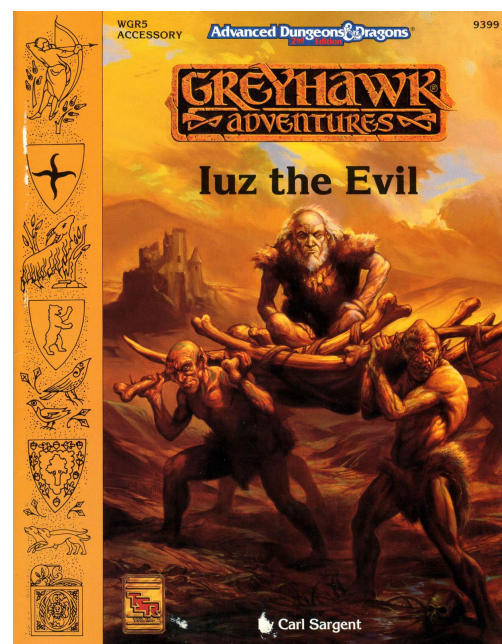
The focus of the setting is the Flanaess, the eastern half of the continent of Oerik. Good makes up the majority alignment in only a quarter of these lands and half the map is controlled by evil powers: The Great Kingdom of Aerdy has fallen to violence and devil worship; slave lords raid the coasts for fresh captives; and the orcish horde of Turrosh Mak marches from the south, conquering city after city. With little time for ethical philosophy in the daily battle for survival, the remainder of the populace is neutral. If you like the constant danger found in video games such as *Darkest Dungeon* or *Diablo*, Greyhawk should be on your travel itinerary.

A good booking agent will hand over those tickets to the Flanaess with a warning: taking a stand against evil on Oerth is a quick way to get killed. In a world full of rough places such as the Wild Coast and the Bandit Kingdoms, it's often best to look out for number one. Those who like roleplaying mercenaries, schemers, and scoundrels are in luck and there has never been a better city for rogues to ply their trade than Greyhawk. Run by selfish oligarchs in league with the Thieves' Guild, it's tailor-made for fans of Bron, Boba Fett, and Jack Sparrow. If you've ever been sat around a table asking your fellow players, "Why should we hand over the sword of power to the king when we could just keep it ourselves?" you will fit right in.

## The Good Place

Yet it's not all foreboding foes and treachery, and there is good on Oerth worth fighting for if you're comfortable with the odds stacked against you. Though besieged on all sides, countries such as Nyrond and Furyondy value kindness and integrity. Aside from the fanatical Scarlet Brotherhood, racial prejudice between humans is unknown and clerics of Rao and Saint Cuthbert lead selfless lives. Those who enjoy seeing Jon Snow try to rally Westeros against the white walkers, even as he faces betrayal in his own ranks and suspicion from his allies, will love the struggle. And if you enjoy playing *Dark Souls* on its hardest setting, try your hand against Vecna, Iuz, or Kas.

However, don't expect any help. This is not the Forgotten Realms, where The Order of the Gauntlet, Elminster and the Harpers are there to help stamp out villainy like the Justice League. Knightly orders which have pledged to protect civilization squabble over politics. The Elves of Celene hide in their forest kingdom, refusing to engage the evil. Greyhawk's mightiest heroes, if you can call them that, are the magi of the Circle of Eight and as it says in *Princes of the Apocalypse*, they



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are “much less benevolent than the Harpers: its wizards are not particularly concerned about tyranny and are more interested in preserving a balance of power...” If your aim is stability, and it suits their self-interest, they may aid you. Righteous or not, if your crusade is politically disruptive or harms their interests, they may fight you instead.

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## World of Wonders

For all its harshness, the world of Greyhawk is never drab and wonders fill every corner. A crashed star-ship in the Barrier Peaks hides ancient alien technology. Gunpowder is unknown, yet the demigod Murlynd wields a magical pair of revolvers. Long ago, two empires annihilated each other with magic, leaving artifacts guarded by the mysterious Silent Ones. The Celestial Empire of Shao Feng lies somewhere to the west, the route known only to Baklunish traders. Whole continents are left uncharted, waiting for Dungeon Masters to imagine their contents and put their own stamp on the world.

The setting is also full of unexpected elements that break the fantasy mold even further. The forests are made up of eleven fictional types of tree invented by Gygax. There are two moons, which are inhabited and can be reached by Spelljammers and clerics of Celestian. Even the humans of Oerth look different from any real-world ethnicity, such as the Baklunish with their golden skin and green eyes. All six human races have their own outlook, culture, and clothing style, for immersive role-playing.

Players may also choose humans of mixed heritage and classic races such as dwarves, half orcs, halflings, gnomes, and elves are well-integrated into the setting. While those races won't cause a stir in the cosmopolitan City of Greyhawk, which is home to a polymorphed dragon, a drow librarian, and a hill giant innkeeper, characters belonging to the more exotic races will frighten most peasants. Abundant details help bring the world to life. Intricate coats of arms of nearly a hundred territories, eighty symbolic runes and dozens of religious symbols make evocative visual aids. There is even a calendar full of feast days, with local customs for each festival.

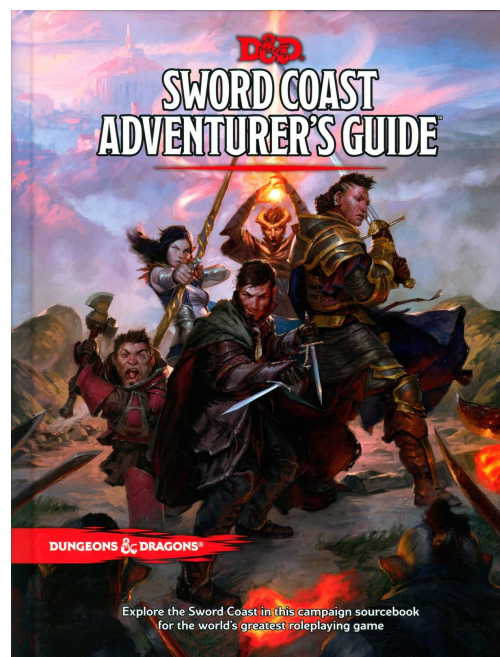
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# Fifth Edition Greyhawk

Those looking to start a fifth edition Greyhawk campaign have so many assets at their disposal. The best starting point for most is the treasure trove that is Tales of The Yawning Portal. Original Greyhawk adventures The Sunless Citadel, the Forge of Fury, the Tomb of Horrors, White Plume Mountain, The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan, and Against the Giants have been fully updated to the latest rules.

For further exploits The Lost Laboratory of Kwalish (which donates money to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals as part of Extra Life) updates the 1981 classic tale Expedition to the Barrier Peaks, complete with iconic Greyhawk elements such as the apparatus of Kwalish and alien-built powered armor.

Next, check out Princes of the Apocalypse, a truly epic campaign which pits players against Gygax's cult of Elemental Evil. Princes also provides five Greyhawk factions to replace the five standard Forgotten Realms factions in any adventure. Speaking of the Realms, The Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide has a helpful section on adapting its new sub-classes to the Flanaess. Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes is similarly essential for anyone wanting to dig further into Greyhawk. Personally narrated by Oerth's most famous wizard, it holds insights into the dwarves, halflings and elves of the Flanaess, as well as providing in-depth studies of classic Greyhawk races and monsters such as the gith, the drow, and Zugtmoy. Meanwhile, Art & Arcana: A Visual History is a must for those interested in the creation of this world. It tells the complete story of the game Gygax and Arneson created and is filled with amazing images showing the history of D&D.



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# Classic Greyhawk

So much of the world of Greyhawk is now available to fifth edition players and DMs but there is still some classic material that is worth digging into. While these resources were written for past editions of the game, there is a free conversion guide available to help bring them up to date.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Those looking to start at the beginning and get an invaluable insight into the setting's initial vision should check out the 1983 World of Greyhawk box set. Dungeon Masters who thrive on crafting much of their campaign from scratch may want to run their Greyhawk adventures with just this original text. Wizards of the Coast's Mearls loves that Gygax provides a basic framework for DMs, allowing them to fill in the rest as they see fit.

“There’s a lot of nuance and hints in the text, tantalizing pieces that challenge a Dungeon Master to make the setting their own,” he says. “The Theocracy of the Pale receives a paragraph describing its recent history, the forces that oppose it, and its ability to defend itself. It’s basic stuff but nothing that really makes it distinct. Then, we have a paragraph that consists of a single sentence: ‘The Pale is not noted for religious tolerance.’ That one sentence is a jumping off point for a DM.

“This approach occupies the perfect middle ground for me. It gives enough structure that I’m starting with more than a blank piece of paper but allows enough freedom that I’m working with a lot of new ideas that I’ve created myself.”

Those who prefer a more fleshed-out setting are also well catered for. A great place for them to start is the Player’s Guide to Greyhawk , an excellent introduction providing extensive information to help your party create characters from Oerth.

A great addition to that is the City of Greyhawk box set, one of the best-written RPG supplements ever published. It presents the Free City in painstaking detail and provides copious advice to help run a campaign. Another excellent resource is From the Ashes , which is

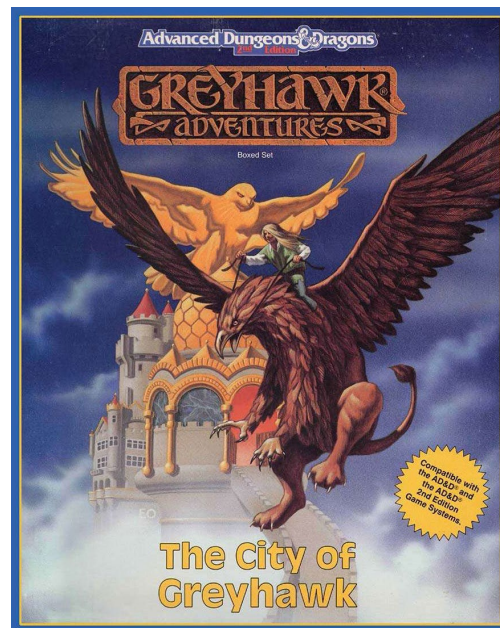
set during the aftermath of a great war and includes details for every nation, fleshing out information on their gods, profiling numerous characters and providing adventure ideas.

Carl Sargent, author of *From the Ashes*, also wrote the *The Marklands* and *Iuz the Evil*.

Together those two adventures provide everything you need to run a campaign where players must resist—or not, this is Greyhawk after all!—an evil demi-god’s empire. Another Sargent work, *Ivid the Undying*, explores the massive territory of the former Great Kingdom.

*The Scarlet Brotherhood* and *Slavers* fill in two more intriguing locales, while *The Living*

*Greyhawk Gazetteer* is an essential guide to Greyhawk’s nations and provides the most comprehensive guide to the world’s religions.



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If you are eager to explore Castle Greyhawk itself, your best option is the 2007 source book *Expedition to the Ruins of Castle Greyhawk*, which builds on the 2nd edition AD&D adventure *Greyhawk Ruins*. *Expedition* is a beautifully illustrated Greyhawk book and its adventure closely echoes the events of the original campaign. Players interact with Mordenkainen and Lord Robilar, stay at the Green Dragon (secretly owned by Robilar), and explore the Free City. As they find themselves battling their way through Zagyg’s labyrinth they tread in the footsteps of Gygax, Arneson and Kuntz all those years ago when the World of Greyhawk—and Dungeons & Dragons itself—was born.

Comedian John Roy has been playing D&D since he was nine years old. You can watch his amazing **stand-up routine from Conan** and connect with him on **Twitter**.



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# CONVERSIONS TO 5TH EDITION D&D

This document provides guidelines for converting characters and adventures from earlier editions of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS to the fifth edition.

Conversion of D&D material is more art than science. The aim of conversion is to arrive at something that feels like the older-edition version, rather than at an exact replication. The guidelines in this document are intended to help you create what you want, not to force your choices along particular lines.

## CONVERTING YOUR PLAYER CHARACTER

Work with your DM to determine the best fit for your conversion. Your DM is the final arbiter of any conversion.

### LEVEL

Your DM sets the starting level of a converted character. For fourth edition characters, fifth edition level is two-thirds of fourth edition level, rounded normally instead of always down. For example, 25th level in fourth edition becomes 17th level in fifth edition. Level in other editions converts directly into fifth edition, but only up to 20th level.

### RACE

Choose the race that most closely matches your character's race. For instance, a wild elf in Faerûn is closest to the wood elf in the *Player's Handbook*. Replace all racial traits with those from the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*. Ignore traits that have no bearing on fifth edition characters, such as third edition's favored class trait or other editions' class limitations.

Racial proficiencies of like kind—skill, tool, or weapon—can be swapped for their equivalents in fifth edition. You might swap skill proficiency for tool proficiency when the tool is a better representation of a skill from a previous edition.

As an example, a wild elf character should have proficiency with spears, according to the third edition book *Races of Faerûn*. Your character could give up longsword and shortsword proficiency from the Elf Weapon Training trait to have spear and javelin proficiency instead. Similarly, if your elf character from third edition relied on rapier proficiency garnered from race, you might swap longsword proficiency from Elf Weapon Training for rapier proficiency.

### FOR THE DM: RACE CONVERSIONS

For races not represented in the *Player's Handbook*, see the "Creating a Race" section in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Start with the racial traits from one or more previous editions. From them, reconstruct the race in fifth edition terms, using existing races and their traits as models. The following general guidelines should help.

**Consistency.** Keep only those racial traits that are consistent from edition to edition. Especially ignore a trait that appears in only one previous edition.

**Ability Scores.** Bonuses to ability scores from race and subrace should add up to no more than +3, unless the race has few other beneficial traits. In most cases, no one score should receive a bonus higher than +2.

Three previous editions of the game included negative racial adjustments to ability scores, and two included racial ability score maximums and minimums. Fifth edition avoids such parameters, but in the case of monstrous races, such as kobolds, penalties can be appropriate.

**Damage Resistances.** In fifth edition, the damage resistance trait has no numeric value. A creature either has resistance to a damage type, or it does not.

**Infravision.** Racial infravision converts directly to fifth edition's darkvision. Use the race's infravision range for its darkvision, or a range chosen by your DM.

**Low-Light Vision.** Most races that have low-light vision in third or fourth edition should have darkvision. The range defaults to 60 feet.

**Powers.** Racial powers can be ignored or converted to the capability of casting a spell similar to the power. A character of the race should have to be of a level high enough to cast the spell as if the character were a spellcaster. For example, a spellcaster should be 5th level to cast a 3rd-level spell. A race that can cast innate spells must have a default spellcasting ability score chosen from among Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

**Small Modifiers.** Other editions' Small races often have traits that offer modifiers to Armor Class, attack rolls, saving throws (or defenses), and skills. Ignore a bonus, unless it is +4 or higher and not to Armor Class. If it is at least that high, proficiency or advantage might be called for as a racial trait. Similarly, ignore a penalty that isn't as severe as -4. Such a penalty might call for disadvantage in the applicable situation.

### CLASS

Choose the fifth edition class that most closely matches your character's class (or classes, if your character has more than one). Alternatively, choose the class that most closely matches how you'd like your character to be in the game's narrative.

Don't feel constrained by your character's original class or classes. For example, you might decide that warlock or sorcerer is a better fit for your magic-user's story than wizard. Similarly, you are free to decide that fifth edition's paladin class or a cleric of the War domain better expresses your fighter/cleric than multiclassing does.

Class names can frame your thinking (the wizard was called a magic-user in first edition and a mage in second edition). But try to think outside that box. For instance, your fourth edition avenger might be a fifth edition paladin with the Oath of Vengeance or a monk who follows the Way of Shadow. Your fourth edition warden could be a fifth edition cleric of the Nature domain, ranger of the Hunter archetype, or paladin who has taken the Oath of the Ancients.

Multiclassing can be the answer to fulfilling many character concepts. Before multiclassing in fifth edition, however, make sure no single class's development path fits the character's intent better. For instance, the Eldritch Knight fighter archetype might be a good fit for a former fighter/wizard (or magic-user, or even an elf from Basic D&D). Likewise, a bard or a rogue with the Arcane Trickster archetype might be a fine fit for a wizard/rogue (or thief). The aforementioned avenger could be a cleric/monk.



## FOR THE DM: CLASS CONVERSIONS

If you'd like to recreate a class from a previous edition, see the "Modifying a Class" section in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Start with the class write-up from one or more previous editions, and compare it to existing fifth edition classes. From that starting point, determine if you can use an existing fifth edition class as a template, modifying it to fit your needs. Try to focus on what made the class thematic across editions, as well as what you know the player would like to play.

## ABILITY SCORES

For most editions, a character's ability scores, unmodified by magic, can convert directly to fifth edition values. In all cases, the upper score limit of 20 still applies. A few extra guidelines follow.

**Exceptional Strength.** First and second edition allowed some characters to have exceptional Strength, expressed as a percentile value following a score of 18. Exceptional Strength has no conversion value, so the character's Strength score becomes 18.

**Scores Higher than 20.** Especially in fourth edition, scores higher than 20 can occur. Such scores should be treated as 20s, or the alternative for reassigning ability scores described next should be used.

**Reassigning Ability Scores.** Rather than converting scores, especially if you have trouble doing so, you can follow the rules for determining ability scores set forth in the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*. To do so, use the standard set of scores or customized scores acquired by spending points. Then apply racial adjustments and any adjustments from the Ability Score Improvement class feature. Use the original character's ability scores to guide your choices.

## PROFICIENCIES

In fifth edition, a character's proficiency options usually come from race, class, and background. Weapon proficiencies can be changed only with DM permission.

Based on your character's history, you should choose a background for your character during conversion. Alternatively, the DM can help you create an appropriate background. Then pick proficiencies that reflect what the character was good at in the previous edition. Here are a few other guidelines for certain editions.

**Second Edition.** You can base background choice on the character's secondary skills or best nonweapon proficiencies, if any. If your character had a kit, it could be the basis of your background.

**Third Edition.** Your character's best skills can guide your background choice. If your campaign setting provided regional or background benefits, you can use those as inspiration too.

**Fourth Edition.** The third edition method is possible, or you can use the character's background or theme as a guide.

## FOR THE DM: BACKGROUND CONVERSIONS

Most of the previous editions provided bases for backgrounds. Second edition rules have secondary skills, non-weapon proficiencies, and character kits. In the span of the third edition rules are backgrounds, regional benefits, and even prestige classes. Fourth edition content also has backgrounds, regional benefits, and character themes. In

all these editions, a character's preferred skills can also indicate a background.

In almost all cases, an existing background can be molded to fit your character. However, if you feel a character needs a new background, first read "Creating a Background" in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Based on the game element used as a model for the background, look to see if an existing background could fit with modifications. If not, use the previous game's element to create a new background.

You can use the character's personality as played in previous game sessions to help define personality traits, an ideal, a bond, and a flaw.

## FEATS

In the conversion process, feats from third and fourth edition should usually be ignored, because feats in fifth edition have a very different place in the game than the feats did in those two editions.

Feats in fifth edition can make a character concept come to life outside the race and class structures. Give the fifth edition feats a look if you feel your character lacks a needed aspect after you convert race and class.

## SPELLS

Pick spells known as if creating a new character of the appropriate level. You can base the choice of spells known on those from previous editions. Similarly, you can base your choice of cantrips on at-will powers the character knows in fourth edition.

The DM is the arbiter of whether and how a spell that doesn't exist in fifth edition can be converted.

## FOR THE DM: SPELL CONVERSIONS

When converting a spell from an earlier edition, your first task is to make sure the intended effect doesn't already exist in a spell in fifth edition. Even if the effect doesn't exist, a similar one might. If you find a similar effect, you can use that spell instead. Or you can base the new spell on the existing one, making the job easier.

When you create a spell, use the "Creating a Spell" section in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The earlier edition's spell is your basis for redesign. For complex spells, such as *earthquake*, give yourself leeway to determine effects based on the context in which the spells are cast. Doing so gives you the opportunity to surprise even the spell's caster when the spell is used.

## DETAILS

Your character's other details stay mostly the same, with the following possible exceptions.

**Alignment.** In most cases, alignments directly correspond between editions. Fourth edition and Basic alignments don't always correspond, so use the following guidelines:

In Basic D&D, you choose lawful, chaotic, or neutral. Lawful corresponds to good—you choose whether it's lawful good, neutral good, or chaotic good. Chaotic similarly matches a form of evil, whether lawful, neutral, or chaotic. For a neutral character, choose lawful neutral, neutral, or chaotic neutral.

For fourth edition, a good character should be your choice of neutral good or chaotic good. An evil character should

be your choice of lawful evil or neutral evil. An unaligned character is your choice of lawful neutral, neutral, or chaotic neutral.

**Languages.** You should select languages from the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, or from a list the DM provides, that most closely match the ones the character understood in the character's original edition.

**Personality.** Based on those in your chosen background, create a trait, ideal, bond, and flaw for your character. Alternatively, choose from those detailed in your new background.

## EQUIPMENT

Equipment should be swapped for fifth edition equivalents. The DM handles the conversion and distribution of gear that isn't in the *Player's Handbook*.

### FOR THE DM: EQUIPMENT CONVERSIONS

As DM, you can allow characters to retain any gear and loot with which you are comfortable. Swap magic items for fifth edition equivalents. The rules in the "Starting at Higher Level" section of chapter 1 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are a fine way to establish a character's starting wealth and gear in a fifth edition campaign. In most cases, the high magic option is the best choice for representing treasure distribution of previous editions.

For mundane equipment, most such gear converts easily, since it has pragmatic (and narrative) effects rather than broad mechanical ones. Use existing equipment as guides, and when necessary, create mechanics appropriate to fifth edition. Remember to use advantage instead of flat bonuses. Also, try to limit mechanical effects to at or below those of common magic items.

## CONVERTING ADVENTURES

The fifth edition of D&D is fairly compatible with adventures from the first, second, and third editions of the game—enough so that quick conversions of adventures from such editions are possible. Careful conversion is the alternative. As the DM—the one who creates and runs adventures—the choice is yours.

The following sections provide guidelines for careful conversions, quick conversions, and the conversion of treasure.

### CAREFUL CONVERSIONS

Converting an adventure to fifth edition with precision requires several detailed steps. Whenever you convert in this way, use what you know about your players' characters to guide the process. Don't bother converting adventure elements you know your players are unlikely to notice or use.

**Encounter Difficulty.** For encounters, the first step is usually to decide what the difficulty of the encounter should be. Doing so requires more intuition than science. Further, the design from edition to edition and adventure to adventure varies on this point.

For first and second edition, encounters were often designed to be on the easy side. This sort of pacing allowed the characters to do more exploring and have numerous encounters before resting and retreating from the dungeon. Ideally, the characters could reach one or more significant encounters or areas, revealing more of the adventure site's background or story, before retreating. Further, the Dungeon Master could more easily allow disparate groups of

foes, once they were alerted to intruders, to join an ongoing fight. You can replicate such pacing by keeping to easy-to-medium encounter groups in the dungeon without reducing the number of encounters.

In third and fourth editions, the encounter level designated for an encounter is useful for determining the intended encounter difficulty based on the level range of the adventure. (In the case of fourth edition, the actual difficulty level should be taken to be two-thirds of the designated encounter level.) For example, if the encounter level is 9 in an adventure designated to be for 7th-level characters, the encounter is intended to be hard or deadly.

**Encounter Structure.** Use the encounter as written to decide on its monster composition in fifth edition. Then use the monsters' challenge ratings, as described in the *Monster Manual*, along with the "Creating Encounters" section in chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, to modify the encounter to the desired difficulty.

An important aspect of this conversion is providing an experience similar to the original. The number of monsters matters much less than the impression the encounter makes on the players.

With that guideline in mind, remember to adjust for possible reinforcements. When multiple groups of opponents can converge on the characters, it can make for a dynamic battle. But such a conflict can also be deadly, which is fine if that's the intent. However, you can reduce the number of potential foes (all the way to zero), move them so they're not potential reinforcements, or place impediments in the site to prevent easy reinforcement.

**Features, Hazards, and Terrain.** An encounter includes site features, hazards, and terrain, and these elements can occur with or without monsters being present. Much of the time, you can use such elements without any new rules; it's enough for you to know the rules in the *Player's Handbook* on cover, difficult terrain, falling, holding breath, perception and investigation, and special movement.

You can make exact conversions, such as for secret doors and wilderness hazards, using the guidelines in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. To convert traps and damaging hazards, use the Trap Save DCs and Attack Bonuses and Damage Severity by Level tables from that chapter.

In third and fourth editions, encounter areas are often quite detailed. Don't feel the need to use every detail presented in adventures from those editions. Convert whatever seems likely to be of interest to your players, and leave the rest for improvisation later. For example, a third edition adventure might tell you how to push over a pillar, yet characters seldom decide to push over pillars or attack statues, unless you call attention to an exploitable weakness in such structures. In contrast, it's not unusual for someone to try to break down a locked door, rather than picking the lock.

**New Monsters.** In older adventures, you'll sometimes run across creatures that lack a published equivalent in fifth edition. In this case, the "Creating a Monster" section in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* is your best tool. The "For the DM: Race Conversions" section in this document can also be helpful.

If you choose to create the monster whole cloth, start by replicating the original monster as closely as possible using elements from fifth edition. Use the HD as the creature's HD in fifth edition (the level of a fourth edition monster can determine the number of HD it has). Ability scores should be in the fifth edition range, from 3 to 30; third and fourth



edition ability scores often need to be reduced. For special traits and attacks, use existing creatures as guidelines.

Once you've converted a monster to fifth edition or created a new one, you can use the Monster Statistics by Challenge Rating table in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the creature's challenge rating. Then, you can adjust HD and other statistics to get the challenge rating you desire.

**Treasure.** In a careful conversion of treasure, you need to create or roll treasure as if creating it from scratch for the adventure. Use the Individual Treasure and Treasure Hoard tables in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to create new assortments of treasure, using what's in the original adventure as a guideline. Be sure to read the "Treasure Tables" section of that chapter to decide how you'll use the tables in recreating the treasure. See also the "Treasure Conversions" section later in this document.

**Magic Items.** Whenever possible, magic items should be swapped for existing magic items from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If this strategy fails, chapter 9 of that book includes rules for modifying magic items and creating new ones. Use the original item as a starting point and existing items as guidelines.

## QUICK CONVERSIONS

Rather than going through the work of full conversion, you may use published adventures from the first three D&D editions as they're printed. You can "convert" during play using the guidelines in this section. Fourth edition adventures aren't usually amenable to quick conversion.

When you do so, it will be difficult to give experience points based on encounters and to determine encounter difficulty accurately. Therefore, be prepared to improvise and allow level advancement through alternative methods, such as those described in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The first task is to select an adventure of the appropriate level for your player characters. Characters of a level in the middle of a suggested level range are likely to find the most challenge with the least overt risk of excessively difficult encounters. In any case, adventures along the lower and middle parts of the level spectrum work better with quick conversion.

Once you've chosen the adventure, use the following guidelines:

**Monster Statistics.** For first and second edition, you can use the shorthand monster statistics in the adventure. In these adventures, monsters are often more numerous, but they typically deal lower damage and have fewer hit points than their fifth edition counterparts. Make the following changes to those first- and second-edition monsters:

- Armor Class equals 19 minus the creature's AC, up to AC 22.
- Attack roll modifiers are  $HD/2 + 2$ , up to +12.
- Saving throw DCs are  $8 + HD/2$ , up to 20.
- If a creature has to make a check or saving throw, and should be good at the roll, use the creature's  $HD/2 + 2$  as a bonus on the roll. Otherwise, use no modifier, or use a penalty to reflect something the creature should be bad at.

In third edition, you can use monster statistics included in an adventure as a guide. Monster distribution in this edition is fairly close to the distribution in fifth edition. As

in earlier editions, such creatures often deal lower damage and have fewer hit points than their fifth edition counterparts. Most statistics in third edition include the creature's ability scores. Use the following parameters:

- Armor Class can be an average of touch AC and actual AC, or 20 percent lower than in third edition. The upper limit is 22.
- Attack roll modifiers are the appropriate ability score modifier + 3.
- Saving throw DCs are  $10 +$  the appropriate ability score modifier.
- If a creature has to make a check or saving throw, use its ability score modifiers. Grant it a +3 bonus if it should be good at the roll.

**Monster Groups.** If a group of monsters has 7 or more members, it should be evaluated to see if numbers should be reduced. Such a reduction is especially important for player characters of lower than 5th level.

**Spells.** For spells, use the most closely matching spells from the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*. You can assign spellcasters cantrips, but doing so is optional. Third edition's 0-level spells can be used as guidelines for such selections.

**Traps.** For traps, improvise by using the guidelines in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Your best tools are the Trap Save DCs and Attack Bonuses and Damage Severity by Level tables from that chapter. Keep copies of those tables handy. Also, keep falling damage in mind.

**Treasure.** Adventures in previous editions often contain more treasure than is common in fifth edition. In third edition, NPCs were especially rich sources of magic items. When improvising, give out only the treasure you're happy with the characters acquiring.

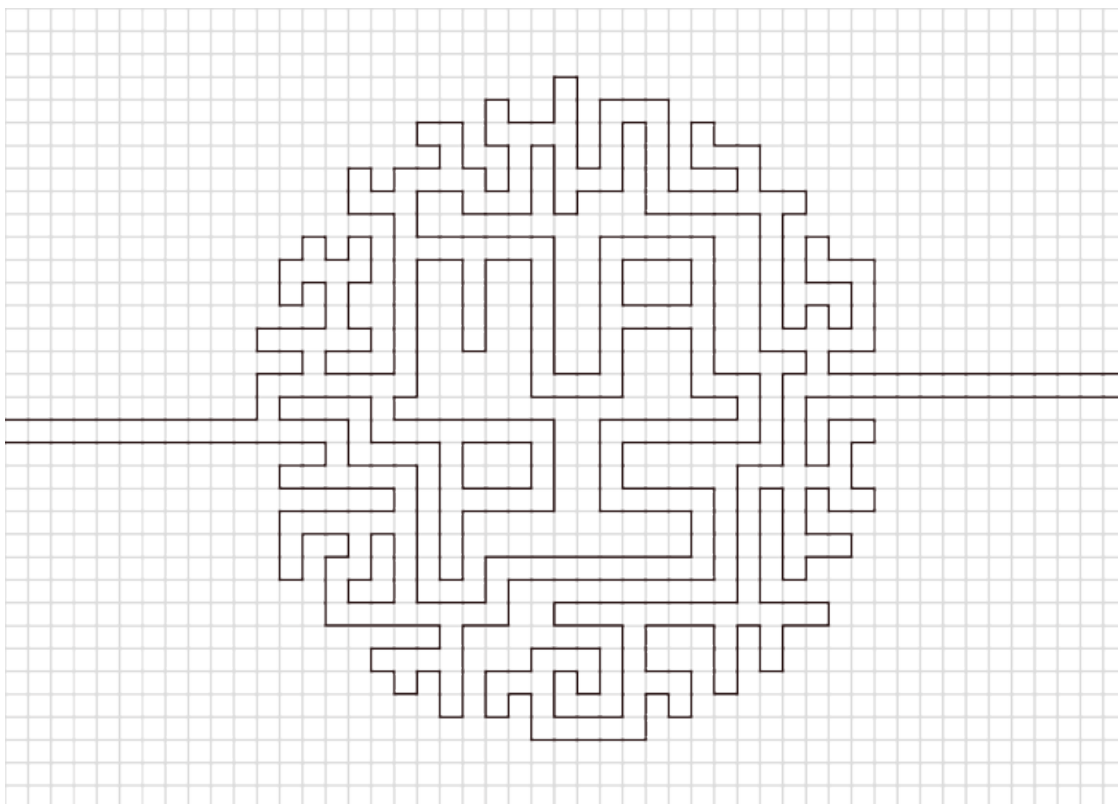
## TREASURE CONVERSIONS

In fifth edition, treasure isn't as abundant and magic items aren't as necessary to character performance as in previous editions.

As the *Dungeon Master's Guide* says, you can hand out as much or as little treasure as you want. Instead of painstakingly recreating treasure to fifth edition parameters, you can use the tables in that book as guidelines for intuitively reconstructing an adventure's treasure. Alternatively, you can hand out whatever is in the adventure, modified to account for fifth edition constraints.

One such constraint is that the highest bonus in fifth edition is usually +3, although a particularly mighty legendary item could confer a +4 bonus. A +6 weapon might have been essential for a particular fourth edition character to function, but even a +1 weapon makes a similar fifth edition character better. Although a character might have had a weapon with a high bonus in a previous edition, maintaining a correspondingly high bonus in fifth edition is unnecessary. Further, the functions of a magic weapon or armor, unrelated to its bonus, are often the most interesting aspects of the item.

Another constraint, although one that is less strict, is the amount of money and salable goods that characters can acquire. The Treasure Hoard tables in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* show appropriate amounts for accumulated treasure. At each level, a party of adventurers has access to two or three hoards from the appropriate hoard tables.



## Maps of the Month

Delving deeper into Undermountain, we find a new round of maps for your game!

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### WATERDEEP: DUNGEON OF THE MAD MAGE

In our [previous issue](#) we showcased the first levels of [Halaster's Undermountain](#). Have your players survived so far? If so, we proudly present the next two levels—showcasing their maps (tagged and untagged) as well as art from these chapters!

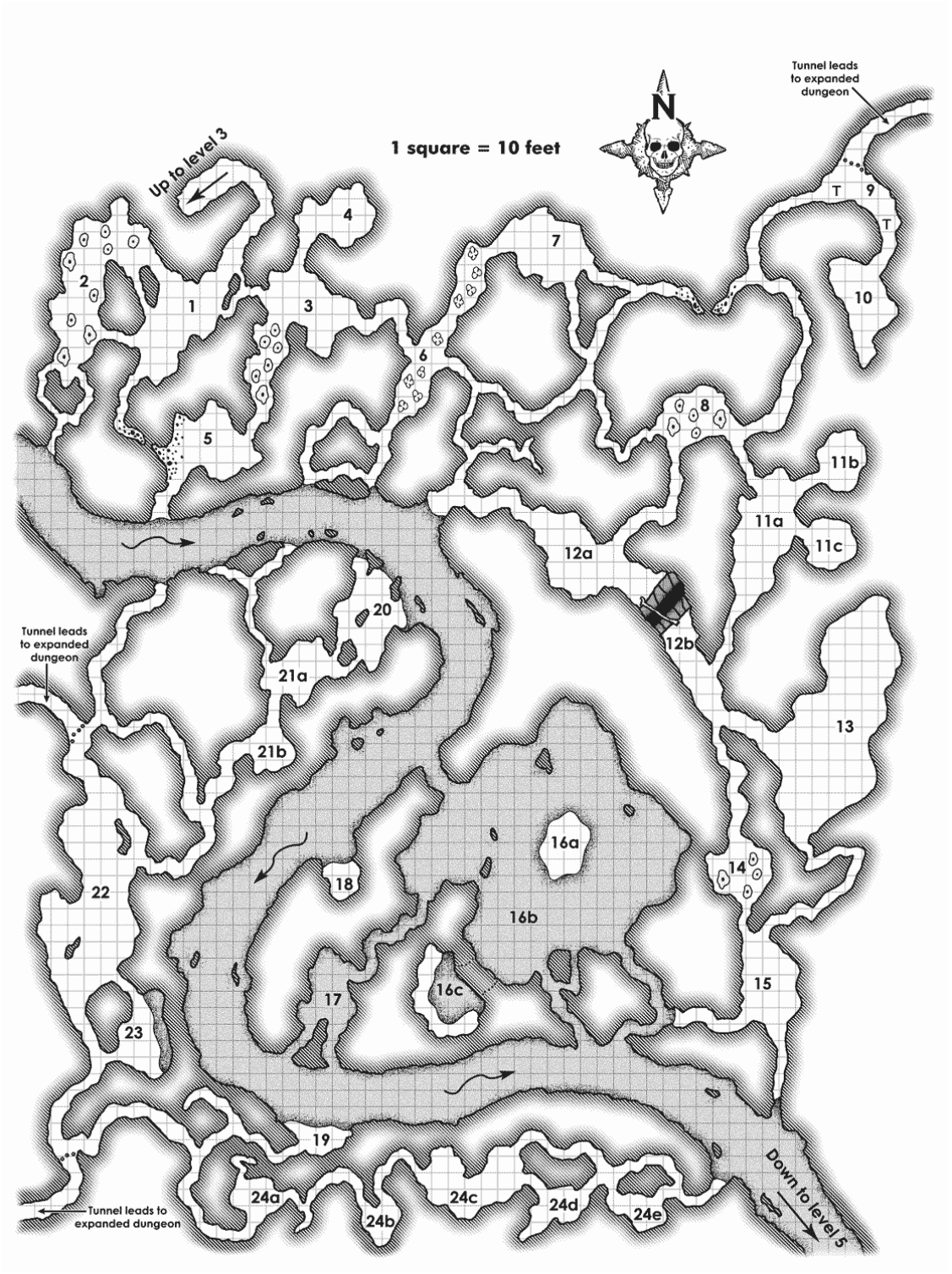




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## Level 4: Twisted Caverns

Designed for 8th-level characters, control of this level is contested between an aboleth and a tribe of kuo-toa. The drow of House Auvryndar watch this conflict intently, waiting to see who comes out on top before making any push of their own. Various other Underdark species vie for a place in these caverns (including an ettin whose heads, Jibber and Jabber, get along surprisingly well... for an ettin).



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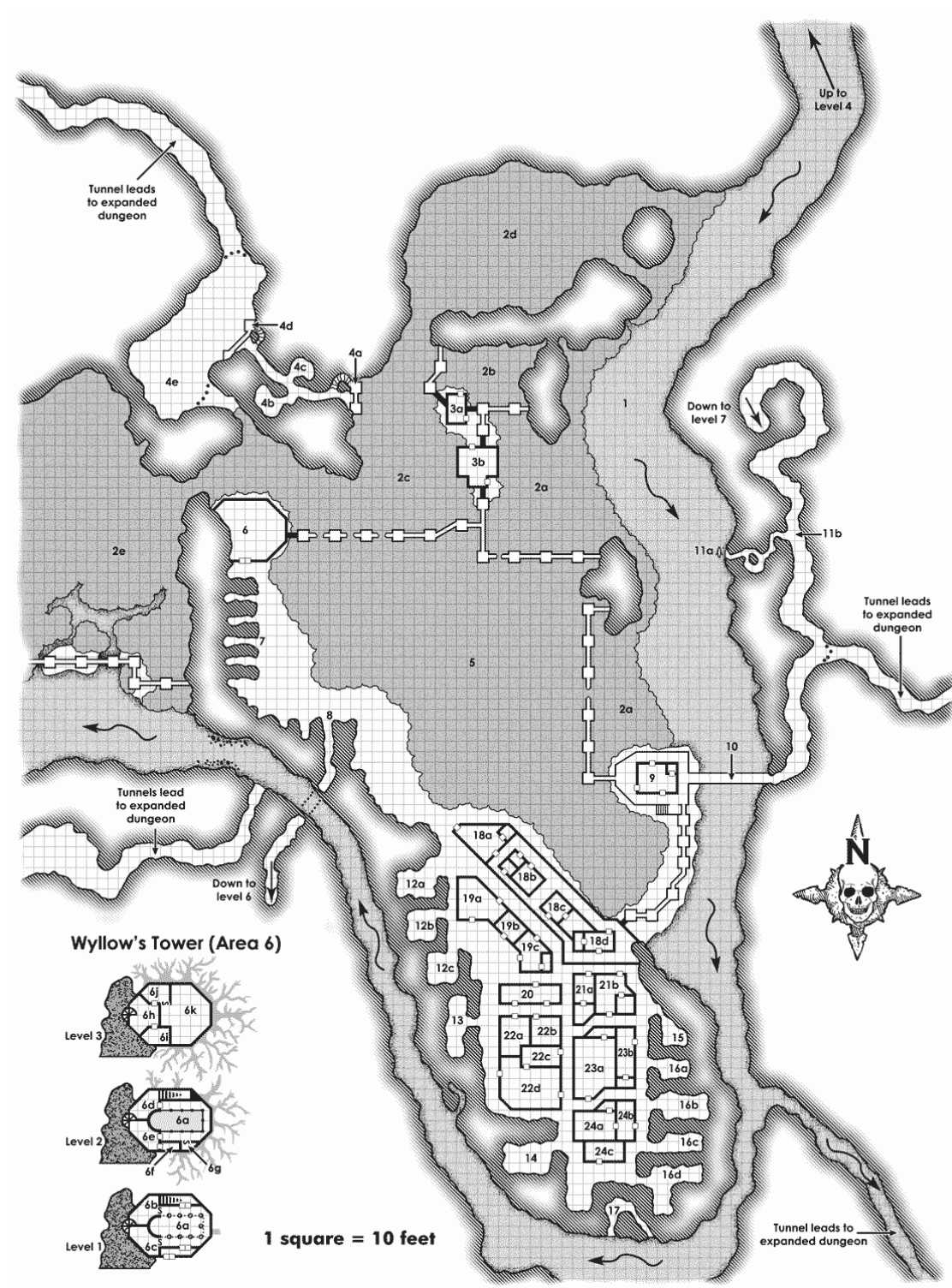




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## Level 5: Wyllowwood

Designed for 8th-level characters, this level contains forests of trees like those that grow on the surface. These temperate forests were magically created by Halaster, and the sky high above can fool adventurers into thinking they have escaped Undermountain and found their way back to the surface. Birds, insects, and tree-dwelling mammals live here alongside Wyllowwood's fiercer denizens.



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## UNDERMOUNTAIN

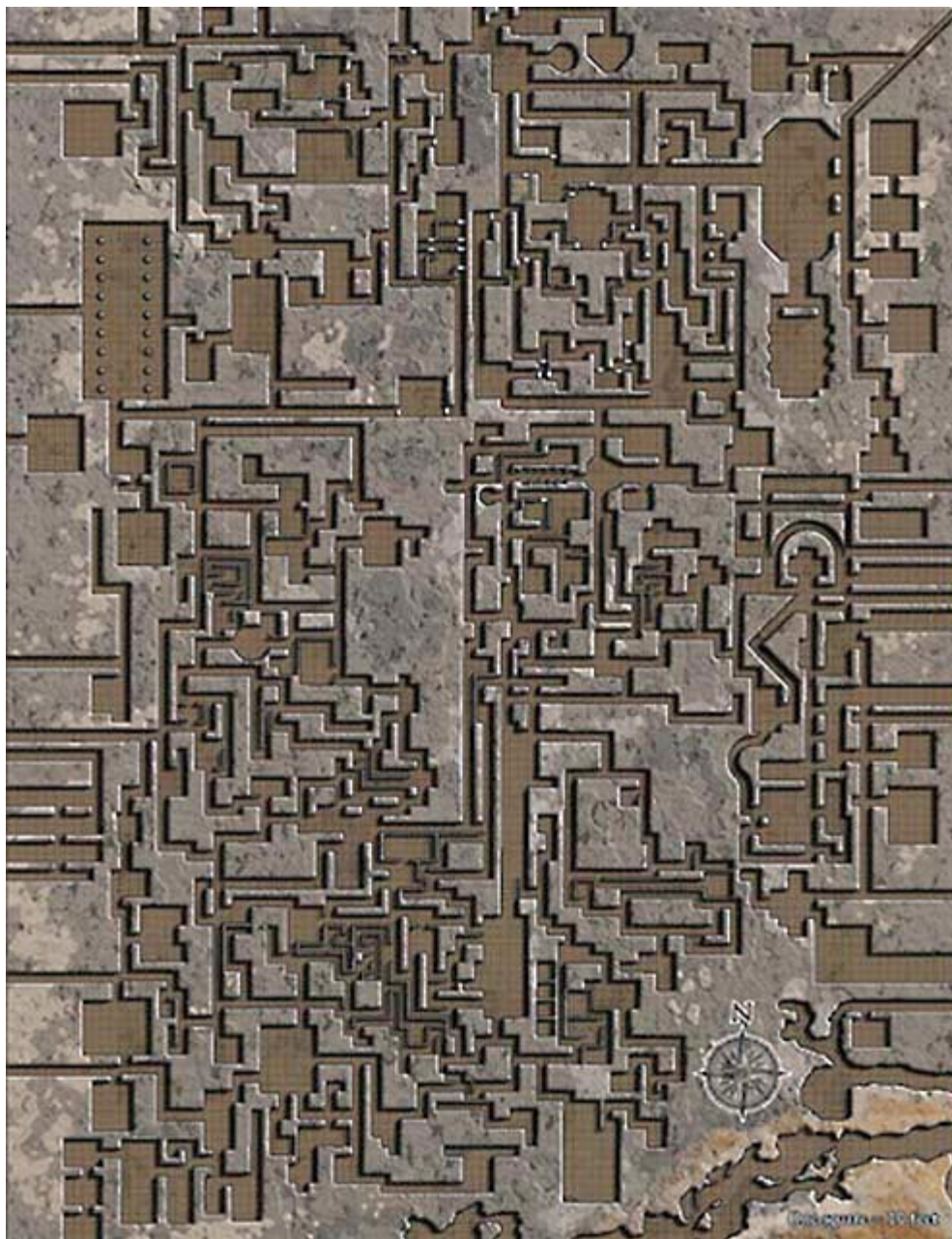
While *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage* has been our most recent exploration of the greatest dungeon of them all, adventurers



have been braving Undermountain for years untold. Ed Greenwood first crafted the nefarious place for his Forgotten Realms home campaign, later published in 1991's *The Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set. Since then it's appeared in such other resources as 2007's *Expedition to Undermountain*, 2012's *Halls of Undermountain*, as well as the *Scoundrels of Skullport* expansion to the *Lords of Waterdeep* board game.

Undermountain is vast, confusing, and above all else, dangerous. For DMs looking to add even more to their games and encounters taking place there, here are further maps for your use, originating from some of these earlier resources:

## AN UNDERMOUNTAIN MAP



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THE HALLS OF LEVEL 1





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TROBRIAND'S GRAVEYARD





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# EXTRA LIFE

Our 2018 adventure *Lost Laboratory of Kwalish* included such map-loving characters as Garret Levistusson and the cartophile himself, Anaxi Zephries. As for the adventure's actual maps? Noted cartographer and illustrator Claudio Pozas created maps for both the Monastery of the Distressed Body as well as Daoine Gloine, the city under ooze.

From the original art order:

A key visual location, the city of Daoine Gloine has long been thought of as mere legend. Occasionally, travelers would return from the mountains with wild claims that Daoine Gloine was populated by creatures made of living glass, tended to by kenku in love with their shining beauty. The city has since been abandoned, repurposed by Kwalish as the site of his new laboratory, and buried for its protection under a gelatinous cube 30 feet deep:

- Intricate stone towers rise from the valley floor, though a few have toppled against one another to form dangerous-looking walkways between them.
- Glimmering glass statuary stands everywhere, decorating the city. Even at a distance, many can be seen to be lifelike humanoids, but gargoyles and caryatid columns also abound, anchored to rooftops, extending outward to form massive lintels above doorways, and so on.
- A strange gleam extends across the entire city, some thirty feet above the ground (the surface of the gelatinous cube). Most of the city consists of carved stone towers whose rooftops and upper levels are strewn with vines and foliage. But below the strange barrier, the buildings of the city are unnaturally clean, showing no signs of life.

While bringing the maps to life, Claudio instilled his own creativity into their design. As he noted, one of his main concerns was to show the bottom of the valley devoid of life, “so I had to have open spaces where streets, gardens, lawns and tree-lined boulevards would be... I also included a couple of plazas with statuary/fountains, to give a sense of distance between the buildings, and tiny specks to show the glassed inhabitants of the city.

“To create a greater contrast, I made sure the encircling valley had lots of vegetation that suddenly stop at the edge of the ooze. You can see that the entrances to the town are walled off with rockslides to contain the ooze.”



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## Cartographers

And as always, our appreciation goes out to our amazing cartographers; this issue, these include [Claudio Pozas](#) and [Tim Hartin](#).



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Reverend Fred Kluth shares his spiritual take on D&D as *Dragon+* offers this platform to thank him for his generous Extra Life charitable donation.

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*Last year, Dungeons & Dragons participated in its sixth consecutive year with the Extra Life charity, benefiting the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. With huge appreciation to our entire community, we raised over \$200k—and as thanks to our generous donors, D&D Team members offered a series of rewards.*

*These included Q&A discussions within Dragon+, which we are pleased to start this issue with Fred Kluth. We thank Fred for his support—and on behalf of the D&D Team, we look forward to taking part in **Extra Life 2019** !*

I started playing first edition Dungeons & Dragons when I was a kid and loved it immediately. I played it all through high school and junior high school, then I fell out of it. Although I still loved the game, I didn't get back into it until much later. It was right before

fifth edition came out that I started to really get curious about it again.

When my daughter Vivian turned eight, we started to play D&D together. She took to it immediately and also loved it. She had taken up reading and when she got into D&D that became voracious as she started to pour through the material. So now we have a ten-year-old who can cross reference books, use an index and knows the rules better than I do. I work in advertising during the day but in 2003 my wife and I started on a program called the Helix Training Group. This is a combination of both Western and



Fred Kluth

Eastern psychology, and spiritualism. We learned the basics of talk therapy, gestalt therapy, hypnosis, Jungian analysis, shamanism, energy work, meditation and Buddhist psychology, and following the four-year program I became a reverend. The theology and spirituality of that took on a new onus when I really started to think about D&D.

## Communal Bonding

One of the things that I've been researching is that men have a hard time making friends after a certain age. As a group, if we're going to do anything it's usually either sports related or going out to have a drink with friends, many of whom we meet through our kids. It's not always a deep connection and we can get very lonely.

While playing D&D I started to think, "Wow, there's something here. This is not just a game. It really helps people in a different way." I homeschool my children so I set up a D&D group for similar fathers—we call it "Dad's D&D" although we now also have one mom in it. It's a chance for us to all get together, play D&D and have an outlet to build community. What I discovered is that D&D is a great way to connect. It's been an amazing way to discuss our problems with homeschooling, our jobs, and other issues in our lives.



## A SELECTION OF FRED'S ARTWORK



When you spend hours with these people a few times a month or however often you can play, you start to know them as more than who they are out in the outside world. You start to know them as a dragonborn paladin or a halfling rather than as a dad, or a project manager or whatever other identities they have in the real world. It starts to blur and your idea of who they are changes because you're experiencing them in this other role. And your memories of these people aren't necessarily of hanging around in a bar with them. You're thinking, "You shot that *fireball* at Strahd and saved us all!" or "You used that crucial *counterspell*." It becomes this really interesting question of who people are.

# Homeschooling

I have two daughters—Vivian who is ten and Charlotte who is seven—and they’ve been homeschooled pretty much their whole lives. D&D has also helped me with that process. Vivian and I travel to Sandusky, Ohio every May to attend the Unschoolers Waterpark Gathering, which is a conference where homeschooling parents and kids get together and share ideas.

One of the nice things about this event is that it sets up tables and we are able to run D&D almost all day long for three or four days. It’s incredibly popular. One of the fathers actually came up to me and was worried that all the D&D groups had been signed up and he couldn’t get his son in to play. He admitted that the only way he had been able to get his son to come along to the conference was the promise that he could play D&D. I told him his son should just show up.

When I ran into him at the end of the event he was so thankful. He said, “You really helped make the conference for my son. He started to play D&D and he’s been so into it and showed up for every event. He made new friends and he also came out of his shell.” I guess he was a shy kid but he really opened up thanks to this experience.

My daughter Vivian also got to participate in a new way this year. I asked her if she would like to do an onstage talk about D&D and she thought that sounded great. It was a really nice experience because we wrote the presentation together. I also contacted Wizards to the Coast who were awesome and sent us 130 **Dungeons & Dragons Starter Sets** to give to everyone who came to our talk.

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[Learn more](#)



We were super popular and all of a sudden my daughter is getting this amazing experience of public speaking, talking about a topic she's really passionate about. She felt very comfortable going up there and it was wonderful as a father to watch her on stage. And when she got nervous she grabbed my hand, which was really sweet.

## Spiritual Ministry

My idea for **Dragon Ministries** came out of my experiences with D&D. I knew that the game helped people build connections and tell us a little about who we are as people, and I wanted to know how we deepen that. Yet with spiritual work people can sometimes expect that they're going to have a traumatic experience which includes a big release of feelings. That can turn a lot of people off the idea because they're terrified of doing just that.

The answer was to look at it another way. If people realize they're going to have fun, meet some new friends and use their imagination as they play, it removes that fear. At the very least you're saying, "Come play D&D!" The question then is how you deepen your connection with your character and your community as you're doing this.

Many of my workshops are basically a long D&D game. And I have two paths, depending on whether I'm working with children or adults. When I'm teaching children who are peers of my daughter, I weave in the story of the hero's journey. It's this idea that the characters leave home, are faced with danger, and become stronger heroes because of it.

With the adults, I weave guided meditations into our sessions: they close their eyes, I play the drums and I weave the story for them. I choose a setting and drop them into their subconscious. They then enter a clearing and see the character they're going to be playing in the adventure and greet them. It's experiential. I ask them what they look like, and what they're wearing, and even what they smell like and how they're reacting. When they leave the meditation, they leave as the character and we go right into the session.

This is super fun and really interesting. Throughout the weekend, between the different sessions, we go back into that state of mind and touch upon different things that may have happened in the adventures. Some people relay their personal experiences, others go really deeply into their character and start talking about them.

At one point we held a meditation around celebration. The party had achieved something good and I had them return home and be celebrated by their hometown. A lot of people felt like they couldn't deal with that and didn't like that attention. This wasn't so much about their character, it was that they couldn't put themselves in that place. So then you start to ask questions of what that says about them: Do they have trouble being seen? And where do they show up in their lives?

Therapeutically, this is transformative. The idea is you're tapping into parts of your own subconscious or archetypes and that's informative of your own personal journey.

**Reverend Fred Kluth runs Dragon Ministries and his next Unleash Your Inner Hero event takes place on April 27, 2019. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and two daughters and likes to paint (find his artwork on Instagram ), write and play Dungeons & Dragons.**

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# Streaming Highlights

This issue we bring you comic-based adventuring, celebrations of classic tabletop and video gaming, as well as more options to complement your ocean voyages.



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## A Darkened Wish

As we touched upon in our exclusive interview with **B. Dave Walters** earlier this issue, the characters from his comic-book *A Darkened Wish* are also being brought to life in a livestream game.

“I prep my adventures, believe it or not, the exact same way I structure movie and TV

screenplays and comics. I break them down into acts. The comic has a certain story progression as it goes through issues one to five, while each individual chunk then also has its own progression. We do the exact same thing with the streams,” he tells *Dragon+*.



“The difference on the livestream is the players will take your plan, ball it up and throw it out the window while they do something completely different. So you have to be far more flexible. I usually have a general idea of where I’m trying to get them and that can be a little hazier, allowing for improv and giving the characters room to breathe.

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“The big difference this time is that the stream will focus on a specific adventure the characters go on in the middle of their lives, acting as a kind of a prequel. So I have to keep the comic narrative in the back of my mind and stay true to that. We can’t burn the castle to the ground when I know the next issue of the comic is them in the castle.”

*A Darkened Wish*’s livestream game begins on the [official D&D Twitch channel](#) in March 2019. Issue one of the comic is available for pre-order now at your local comic-book store or through [ComiXology](#).



# D&D Adventure Hunt

” *D&D Adventure Hunt* is specifically aimed at helping Dungeon Masters find adventures that are right for them,” Chris Perkins tells *Dragon+* as he prepares to look back at past works. “Given the game’s long history and the sheer number of adventures that have been created over the years, it can be daunting for DMs to sift through everything to find the perfect gem they’re looking for. As someone who has written and edited several hundred D&D adventures, I think I can highlight content that’s definitely worth considering.”



Chris Perkins

Each stream will focus on three D&D adventures. Sometimes the choices will be thematically linked (by location, genre or monster, for example), while other times those three adventures may span different levels of play.

“With older content, my intention is to focus on adventures that convert easily to fifth edition, and I’ll spend time talking about how I would run them using the fifth edition rules. I’ll be pulling adventures from everywhere, but I’ll try to focus on ones that are readily available on **the DMs Guild** or elsewhere,” he adds.

“Given my history with the D&D print magazines, *Dragon* and *Dungeon*, it’s safe to assume some of my adventure suggestions will come from those sources. Our community will also be able to help guide the show, by telling us what they want to see covered in future streams. Periodically, I’ll invite guests to come on the stream and give each of them a chance to discuss an adventure they think other DMs should know about.”

***D&D Adventure Hunt*** streams on the **official D&D Twitch channel** in spring 2019.

## Welch's Game Juice

“This is my first real foray into *Baldur's Gate*,” says Kate Welch as she begins a playthrough of the *Enhanced Editions* of Beamdog's video game series. “I briefly played *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II* on my PS2 back in the day, but that's it.

“This is one of those video game series that everyone reminisces fondly about, so it's been a blast to experience it from the beginning. The first *Baldur's Gate* has shocked me with the freedom players have—particularly the freedom to brutally murder anybody you meet! I'm excited to get to meet, but *not* murder, Minsc and Boo one of these days, at long last!

“The logo for the stream and the “JUICED” emote we have on Twitch were created by Emi Tanji, one of our incredibly talented art directors. She's responsible for making our books look gorgeous, and in her spare time she cranks out insanely cute logos and caricatures.”



**WATCH ON TWITCH**

*Welch's Game Juice* streams on Thursdays at 3PM PT on **the official D&D Twitch channel**.

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## D&D Beyond



Continuing our theme of seagoing adventures this issue, there's plenty of fun material to add to your own campaigns on D&D Beyond: From homebrew creatures such as a **ship mimic** to the wondrous, legendary *ship in a bottle*. You can also find Mike Mearls discussing one of Todd Kenreck's favorite mythological creatures, the kraken. From its selfish psychology to the cults it might have spawned among humanoids, it's a fascinating creature.

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[Learn more](#)

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## D&D Vortex

Can you tell the difference between an otyugh and a neo-otyugh? William Shatner can! The Big Bang Theory aired their D&D Vortex episode, also guest starring Wil Wheaton, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Kevin Smith, and Joe Manganiello!

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You can watch the full episode on cbs.com [here](#).



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## Fiction: Law and Order

A look at Beamdog's Rasaad yn Bashir's early years—starting as a pickpocket in the streets of Calimport...

by Dave Gross

---

### Part 1: Fishing

**R**asaad wound like a cat between the legs of the bazaar customers. They shooed him off as he brushed past or startled the camels by darting under their bellies. After an instant's irritation, they turned back to the colorful tables and ignored Rasaad as just one more urchin in the streets of Calimport.

Rasaad kept himself from staring directly at the veiled woman, but he never lost sight of her—nor of the jeweled purse at her hip. A crocheted veil obscured her features, but when she turned Rasaad could glimpse the whites of her eyes around dark irises. She wore an aba of such deep purple that it appeared black except where its folds caught the light of the sun.

Rasaad first spied her as she emerged from the khanduq's inner court, where the guards had twice turned him away. The second time the one with a jackal's face gave him a rap across the knuckles to remind him of his place, which was not where wealthy customers bargained for precious silks and spice in the Sufontis market.

In the teeming outer bazaar, no one noticed another eight-year-old boy. The problem was that the people there carried less money, often only a few coins in a closed fist to thwart pickpockets.



Pickpockets like Rasaad and his brother. Gamaz never called what they did “stealing”. Instead, he said they were “fishing” for copper, silver, or gold fish.

Gamaz was two years taller, two years stronger, and two years wiser than Rasaad. He had even learned how to bluff his way past the khanduq guards to fish the inner market, where the customers’ purses overflowed with gold and platinum coins more brilliant than the scales of the syl-pasha’s famous carp. Rasaad had yet to learn his brother’s trick. No matter how he practiced, he could not tell a convincing lie.

While he was clumsy with words, Rasaad was quick with his hands. More often than not, the boys bought their meager suppers with the copper and silver he fished from the purses in the outer bazaar.

Pretending to inspect a table of fresh dates, Rasaad sidled up to the dark-robed woman. He turned as if to walk away from the table. Instead, he kept turning and stepped closer to the woman. Gleaming topazes surrounded a large onyx on her purse clasp. Rasaad cupped the pouch in his left hand and raised the tiny blade between the fingers of his right hand. Before his blade touched the string, a hand grasped his wrist.

Rasaad crouched, ready to hurl himself beneath the date-seller’s table and scramble away, but he recognized the hand upon his arm by its bruises. He looked up to see Gamaz shaking his head. His eyes, still blackened from a fight with rival “fishers”, opened wide in fear as he put a finger to his lips.

Rasaad followed as Gamaz led him away from the woman. The boys did not stop until they came to the mud-brick wall that marked the border of the drudach.

“Did you not see?” said Gamaz. “That was the symbol of Shar upon her purse. She comes from the Temple of Old Night.”

Cold sweat seeped out of Rasaad’s pores and instantly evaporated in the morning heat. How close had he come to destruction?

Among Calimport’s dark temples, none was more feared than that of the Mistress of the Night.

Everyone had heard stories of the torments practiced in the House of Nine Blessings or of the fire-purification at the Imperious Flame, yet no one whispered a word of what occurred in the enigmatic Temple of Old Night. The mystery made the temple of Shar that much more terrifying.

“Thank you, brother,” said Rasaad.

“Have you caught anything?”

Rasaad’s empty belly grumbled as he shook his head no.

“Neither have I,” said Gamaz. “It is time we worked together.”

“No one in this market is fooled by that trick anymore,” said Rasaad. He had escaped, but Gamaz had suffered a terrific beating the last time a man caught his arm while he was cutting his purse.

“Then we must choose a stranger. I see one now.”

Rasaad followed his brother’s gaze to a shaven-headed man. Black tattoos swirled up from his neck to curl upon his cheeks and chin.

“He looks like a bandit,” said Rasaad.

“He looks like a stranger. The guards will laugh at him if he complains.”

Rasaad smiled. His brother was right. He had learned how to keep them both alive, if not always well fed, since their father’s death.

“You know what to do,” said Gamaz. He pushed himself back into the crowd. An instant later, even Rasaad could not see where he had gone, but he knew where Gamaz was going.

Rasaad looked once more for a glimpse of the woman from the Temple of Old Night. At first he was relieved not to see her, but then he remembered that the power of Shar lay in shadow. He trembled to think she might have hidden herself to watch him and wait for her revenge.

He looked instead for the stranger. The man was easy to spot as he wandered from table to table, apparently unfamiliar with the bazaar.



Dust tinted the man's robes and blackened his foot wrappings. He had traveled to Calimport from somewhere far away.

Gamaz was right. No one would care that he had lost his purse.

Dodging the adults in the bazaar, Rasaad threaded a path through the crowd. When he saw an opening, he rushed past the stranger's legs—not so close as to strike the man, but near enough to draw his attention forward. Rasaad ran on, confident that behind the man, Gamaz was doing his part in the fishing.

After he had run a good twenty yards through the crowd, Rasaad paused to look back. The stranger looked straight at him. Instead of the expected scowl of annoyance, a mild smile adorned the man's face. The expression gathered wrinkles around the man's bright blue eyes, making him look at once much older and more youthful than Rasaad had first thought.

The man's gentle countenance startled Rasaad more than a cry of "Thief!" He ran across the Tlaen Drudach and through the gate of the low stone wall into the neighboring Sukan Drudach. While both neighborhoods belonged to the great Sahar Sabban, moving from one to the other was like visiting a different city. Beyond the wall, the bazaar crowds thinned to allow even donkey carts to pass unhindered, and the scent of a thousand spices gave way to the intoxicating odor of baking bread.

As Rasaad ran beside the Twelve Ovens building, a pair of bearers lifted their litter of barley cakes out of his reach and continued their trip to the Golden Sands Breweries. Rasaad followed the porters through the high gate marked with a trident within an oval. They left the Sahar Sabban to enter the Larau Sabban, famed for its arenas.

Rasaad parted ways with the cake-bearers at the Arena Sabam, whose soaring basalt walls he had never entered because of its admission charge and mandatory wagers. On the three days each month when gladiators raced chariots drawn by horses, monsters, or flying steeds, the crowd's thunder rolled over all the drudachs of vast Calimport.

He passed the Arms House, with its gates adorned in brass for the courage of the gladiators who trained with the priests of Tempus, god of war. Once they entered, the combatants never again stepped

outside the chained gates of the complex, instead traveling through underground tunnels leading only to the sabban's two great arenas. Victory was their only route of escape.

All the way across the Shomoz Drudach, beside the high stone wall separating it from the Marekh Sabban, stood the Arena Efreetum. Its name came not from the spirits associated with the City of Brass but from its colossal support pillars, each carved to resemble a column of flames. It had been the boys' first rendezvous ever since the day they had stood within its sandy grounds and witnessed their father fight and die for his debts.

A snoring beggar occupied the nook beneath the ramps to the arena's upper tiers. He stank of cactus pear wine, and Rasaad recognized the grizzled beard jutting from the cotton hood he had pulled over his face. The beggar sometimes tried to rob the boys of their day's catch. Together the boys could drive him off with stones, but without his brother's support, Rasaad knew it was better to move on.

Rasaad went to the Zeqra Drudach and their second rendezvous, this one beside a closed Golden Sands Brewery. Yet it was not his brother Rasaad saw sitting upon an empty barrel beside the abandoned brewery. It was the stranger. The man sat cross-legged like a storyteller, plucking the red arils out of a halved pomegranate. He spied Rasaad and offered him the other half.

Rasaad tensed, but before he could flee he heard a muffled voice shouting from inside the barrel. He could not make out the words, but he recognized his brother's voice.

Indignation wrestled with fear inside Rasaad. He was used to being the one rescued, not the one to come to his brother's aid. In the moment when indignation was stronger than his fear, Rasaad snapped, "Let him out!"

"How fierce you are." The stranger smiled. Despite his shabby clothes and weathered skin, his teeth were as straight and white as a sultan's. He threw the pomegranate hard at Rasaad's chest. Rasaad surprised himself by catching the fruit in the cup of his palm before it could strike him. He looked up to see whether the stranger was impressed, but the man was gone. The lid of the barrel flew off, and Gamaz popped up, gasping for breath and still clutching the



stranger's leather purse. He looked at Rasaad, and his eyes widened. "Behind you!"

Without turning, Rasaad threw himself forward in a somersault. As he came up to his feet, the stranger stood less than a foot in front of him. Rasaad had not seen him move. He simply appeared there, like a wizard. Rasaad stepped back. The man made no effort to grab him.

"You are quick," said the stranger. "Quick of foot and quick of wits."

Behind the man, Gamaz had climbed out of the barrel and held its lid in both hands. He crept forward, his eyes imploring Rasaad to capture the man's attention.

"Where do you come from?" said Rasaad. "You are not from Calimport."

The stranger nodded. "I come from the Sun Soul Monastery to buy supplies for my brothers and sisters."

Rasaad felt a brief pang of shame to know that they had stolen from monks. Monks were almost as poor as beggars, although they at least had a home in the monastery. Gamaz inched closer to the stranger, the barrel lid raised to strike. The man began to turn his head.

"What is this Sun Soul?" Rasaad said, taking another step back to draw the monk's eye.

Once more the man smiled, and Rasaad knew his ploy had failed. The man was perfectly aware that Gamaz was sneaking up behind him. Yet he did not move away or turn to defend himself.

Rasaad shook his head to warn Gamaz, but it was too late. Gamaz swung the lid with all his strength.

The man collapsed to the ground, but Rasaad saw that he fell just before the lid could strike him. The stranger tumbled backward, rolling beside and behind Gamaz in one smooth motion.

As his target dodged, Gamaz fell forward, his momentum throwing him over the lid to sprawl on the dusty street. Rasaad gasped, astonished by how easily the man had evaded the blow and repositioned himself. His feat had seemed as casual as a shrug.

Rasaad pointed at the monk. “You are the one who is quick and clever.”

Gamaz rose from the street, stunned but unharmed. The monk’s leather purse lay on the ground. Gamaz crouched, ready to flee, but Rasaad knew neither of them could outrun the man. He picked up the purse and offered it to the monk. “Please forgive us and let us go in peace.”

The man pushed the purse back into Rasaad’s hand. “Keep it. With the money inside, you and your brother can eat for months. Or—”

“Thank you, sir!” Gamaz bowed to the ground. He tugged on Rasaad’s trouser leg, encouraging him to bow also. Rasaad remained standing. He peered into the stranger’s blue eyes, trying to look past that disarming smile. “Or what? What were you going to say?”

“Or come with me,” the man said. “Bring the purse, and help me carry supplies back to my monastery. There you will work hard, harder even than you have worked here on the streets of the city. And you will learn to read, and what you read will be harder than all your other work. But you will work and read every day. You will become quicker still, quick of foot, quick of hand, and quick of mind.”

Rasaad liked what the man said, but he did not trust the easy manner in which he had caught the boys. It occurred to him that Gamaz and he were not the only ones who had gone fishing at the bazaar. In stealing the man’s purse, the boys had taken both bait and hook.

“Will you teach us to fight?” asked Gamaz.

“You will learn what is more important: How to avoid fighting, and when fighting cannot be avoided.”

The enthusiasm in Gamaz’s face dimmed.

“But also you will learn to fight.”

Gamaz brightened. He was the elder, so the decision was his to make.

Rasaad asked, “What shall we do, brother?”

“We shall learn how to fight.”



## Part 2: The Path to Light

“What lies in darkness?” asked the Mistress of Scrolls. Her eyes scanned the novices sitting in a crescent around her. “Faruq?”

“Evil,” said the half-orc boy. “Evil lies in darkness.” At thirteen, Faruq was larger and stronger than seventeen-year-old Gamaz, the eldest novice of the Monastery of the Moon.

Sahana raised her hand, despite the many times the mistress had told her the gesture was unnecessary. “Lies!”

Faruq snarled at the girl. Although half his size, she didn’t flinch from his tusked face.

“I didn’t mean you were lying, you mooncalf. I meant lies lie in darkness.”

A few of the other novices chuckled, but the mistress’s countenance remained as impassive as the face of the moon.

When she turned to Gamaz, Rasaad saw his brother’s lips tighten. Gamaz did not excel at scholarship as he did at combat. Still, his pride demanded that he give the correct answer. “Nothing lies in darkness, mistress,” he said. “Only the void.”

The Mistress of Scrolls turned from one novice to the next, asking the same question. Each offered a different answer, hoping it was better than those that had come before.

Rasaad tried to free his mind from the desire to exceed his fellow novices even as he sought the answer. He had read a scroll about the need to calm one’s mind before receiving wisdom. It was a necessary task, as the scholar had written, much like polishing a mirror so that it can reflect a true image. What lies in darkness?

Despite his efforts to free himself from rivalry, Rasaad still wished to please the Mistress of Scrolls. Yet even more than that, he wished to understand. All he knew was that he didn’t know.

Once he accepted that fact, he understood the question and knew its

answer.

The mistress turned to him. “Rasaad, what lies in darkness?”

“I don’t know.”

Her eyes widened. “You don’t know? That is your answer?”

“Yes.”

The mistress stared at him for a moment. “Ah.”

No one spoke for what felt like a long time until she dismissed the novices with a gesture. They left the symposium and walked through the terraced garden.

When they first arrived seven years earlier, Rasaad and Gamaz had been astonished to see such lush gardens. Three days’ journey east of Calimport, the monastery perched atop a cliff so close to the Shining Sea that they could smell the salt water on the breeze.

As they approached the inner court, Faruq and a few of the other boys ran ahead, eager to begin practice. The others clustered around Rasaad.

“The mistress never said ‘Ah’ before,” said Badro. The boy was Rasaad’s age, but he had been at the monastery less than a month. The sun had barely begun darkening his shaved scalp to match his bronzed face.

“Why did you say you didn’t know the answer?” said Gamaz. “You always know.”

“He did know,” said Sahana. “No one knows what lies in darkness until the light shines upon it. It was an excellent answer.”

“Is that what you meant, Rasaad?”

Rasaad nodded. He hadn’t known it at first, but the truth had come to him in the moment before the mistress called his name.

“Huh,” said Gamaz. “That is an excellent answer.”

His brother’s approval delighted Rasaad.



They passed through the gardens and climbed the steps to the Court of Light, where senior members of the order sparred before the stranger who had first brought them to the monastery. After witnessing his skills first-hand in the streets of Calimport, Rasaad was not surprised to learn that the man was the order's Master of Combat.

The Master of Sigils had tattooed the initiates and monks with whorls and orbs representing the passage of light from the moon, the shards, and the stars. The tattoos covered only the arms of the initiates. Those of the monks crossed their chests and shoulders as well. A few monks also had tattoos on their necks and faces, indicating that the monk would soon become the disciple of a grand master or else set out alone as an immaculate, spreading the Sun Soul philosophy everywhere.

The patterns of the night sky also adorned the plaza in tiles of vivid colors. The curving paths encircled a disc representing the planet Toril, which comprised all the known and unknown realms. Surrounding Toril were the heavenly bodies that cast light upon the world, each linked to the others by streams of light.

To the north of Toril blazed the sun, which Rasaad understood did not orbit the planet, as the ignorant believed. In the time of ancient Netheril, the earliest incarnation of the Order of the Sun Soul had been dedicated to the sun god Amaunator, whose spirit now flowed through the other gods of light.

To the south shone Selûne, trailed by the shards, her sparkling tears. The Monastery of the Moon was dedicated to her, the moon goddess whose face gentles the harsh light of the sun.

On the east and west sides of the court swirled rosy waves and halos representing twilight. One stood for Lathander, god of the dawn. The other was for Sune, the radiant goddess who spreads her red hair across the clouds at sunset.

"Today will be the day," said Gamaz. "I can feel it."

Smiling, Rasaad shook his head. Gamaz said the same thing every day.

The last Rite of Initiation had taken place almost two years earlier, and neither brother had won past the initiates defending the outer veil. Every day since, when the novices approached the Court of Light, the Master of Combat simply dismissed the elder students and began the drills.

But this day, when the master called the senior students to attention, he did not give them leave to depart. Instead, he bade four monks kneel on the four points of Toril. The others dispersed to occupy the sun and the moon and all the rays and motes between.

“Yes!” hissed Gamaz.

Rasaad felt the same thrill as his brother. After two more years of training, he believed each of them could win past the outer veil of defenders and become initiates. Perhaps Gamaz could even defeat the monks defending the North, South, East, and West to stand upon Toril and join their ranks.

“Take your places,” said the Master of Combat.

The novices spread out, each choosing a star-tile on which to stand. Gamaz dashed all the way around the circle, taking a star as far as possible from Rasaad.

Faruq and Badro both chose the same star nearest the smallest of the initiates, hoping for an easy first opponent. The half-orc shoved the smaller novice out of the way. Badro took his place on the next star, looking deflated as he faced a burly opponent.

Rasaad took the star on the other side of Faruq. The initiate nearest him was a young woman with six parallel scars beneath her right eye. The rumor was that each cut represented a man she had been forced to kill before seeking refuge in the monastery.

The initiate was not an opponent but an obstacle, Rasaad reminded himself. He needed only to move past her, while she had to throw him to the ground to disqualify him. She scratched her chin with her thumbnail before assuming a ready stance.

“Now!”

Rasaad feinted a kick to her ankle. She withdrew her lead foot, her



shoulder dropping in anticipation of a follow-up strike. It never came. Instead, Rasaad twirled his body in the opposite direction, leaping high to plant a hand on her shoulder. He kicked his legs over his body and vaulted over her.

An expression of surprised irritation flashed over the initiate's face, but when she saw Rasaad's quick bow of respect, she smiled and returned the gesture.

Turning to face the monks guarding the four corners of Toril, Rasaad saw that Gamaz too had won past the initiates. A moment later, Faruq threw his initiate over his shoulder and stepped inside the veil.

Badro and Sahana had already fallen. Soon after, so too did all of the remaining novices. They picked themselves up, bowed to the initiates who had disqualified them, and returned to the stars. The initiates did the same, sitting between the novices. All eyes turned toward the three remaining novices and the four monks defending the corners of the world.

"Gamaz, Faruq, and Rasaad, are you content to join the initiates of the Sun Soul?" asked the Master of Combat.

"No, Master!" cried all three in unison.

"Very well. Stand upon the face of Toril, and join the monks."

Rasaad and Gamaz ran to join each other, as they had long planned. Seeing what they were doing, Faruq ran to join them. Gamaz told the half-orc, "Follow my lead."

Rasaad kicked at the legs of the Guardian of the West, this time not feinting. The monk leaped above the sweep and deflected a punch from Faruq, but Gamaz grasped his wrist rather than striking, pulling the monk off the image of the world.

"The West falls," declared the Master of Combat. The remaining monks altered their positions to defend the circle, three against three.

Gamaz lunged at the Guardian of the South, but Rasaad knew his second attack would be a misdirection. He rolled behind Faruq, tumbling across the tiles to strike at the Guardian of the East. The defender was ready for the ruse. He stood firm against Rasaad's

flurry of strikes.

Caught between the brothers, Faruq hesitated only an instant before rushing Rasaad's opponent. A flicker of annoyance crossed Gamaz's face as he saw the half-orc put himself in the way of his intended charge, but then he smiled. He ran up Faruq's back and flew over the Guardian of the East.

Faruq flinched, mistaking Gamaz's stunt for an attack. In that moment of hesitation, he dropped his guard and the Guardian of the North leaped between his fellow defenders and kicked the half-orc squarely in the chest. Faruq fell to the ground with an indignant grunt.

The distraction allowed Gamaz to sweep the legs out from under the Guardian of the East. Rasaad leaped over the fallen monk to kick the Guardian of the North between the shoulder blades. The blow sent the man two steps outside the circle of Toril.

Gamaz and Rasaad harried the remaining guardian from opposite sides. The young man was skilled, but the brothers were quicker, each anticipating the other's actions as if they could read each other's thoughts. At last, Gamaz dove into the monk's legs as Rasaad leaped into a flying kick to send the man tumbling outside of the circle.

Breathing heavily, Rasaad looked around at the circle of novices, initiates, and monks. He caught Sahana's eye, but she did not return his triumphant smile. Instead, she grimaced and looked away. Rasaad followed her gaze to the Master of Combat. He remembered the unspoken rule of the Rite of Initiation.

"Only one may remain," said the Master.

"Brother," said Gamaz from the other side of the disc of Toril. "You are best in studies, but I am best in combat."

Rasaad assumed a ready stance and scratched his chin with a thumbnail. "Prove it."

Gamaz smiled, but a shadow of uncertainty darkened his eyes.

All his life, Rasaad had looked to his elder brother for direction. When he did not know what to do, he followed Gamaz without



question. When he thought his brother had made a mistake, he told him so—and Gamaz listened. Rasaad loved his brother more than anyone or anything else in the world, and in his smile he saw a truth he had never fully understood before.

Gamaz needed this victory.

Rasaad knew before he saw it which stance Gamaz would take. He knew before it came that the first attack would be a rush with three short punches followed by a high kick. He blocked the strikes and bowed beneath the kick before tumbling to his brother's left, Gamaz's weaker side.

Rasaad struck his brother hard in the ribs, then again. His blows would leave bruises, he knew. Later, Gamaz would look on them and think to himself, Rasaad fought hard.

Gamaz swept Rasaad's ankles, but Rasaad somersaulted over the kick. He recovered his stance just on the edge of Toril, rising in a crane stance, prepared to counter almost any attack.

But not the one he knew Gamaz would launch.

As Gamaz feigned a rush and instead dove toward Rasaad's feet, Rasaad leaped, a fraction of a second too slow, his recovery barely insufficient. Gamaz's kick pushed him just out of bounds. Rasaad fell, recovering with a deft roll on the streams of moonlight flowing from the image of Selûne. He bowed toward his brother, his heart brimming with pride.

Novice, initiate, and monk alike stood, slapping their thighs in appreciation of Gamaz's victory. As he saw the faces of his brothers and sisters grimace sympathy or look straight past at his triumphant brother, Rasaad felt he had done a good thing.

Until his eyes fell upon Sahana, who looked at him with disbelief. The way she shook her head made Rasaad uncomfortable. Rasaad turned away from her to face the Master of Combat, but he found no solace in the man's grave countenance.

“Present yourselves, Gamaz and Rasaad.”

Rasaad hesitated while Gamaz strode proudly to kneel before the

master. A queasy misgiving tugged at Rasaad's heart as he followed to kneel beside the master.

"I name you both monks of the Sun Soul. Gamaz, you burn bright as the sun and must learn to temper your passions. Do not bask in your own light, but learn to reflect it on others. And you, Rasaad, you dwell yet in twilight. It is well to perceive the subtleties of dusk and dawn, but do not lose yourself in the shadows."

The Master of Combat released them to the cheers of the other monks, the initiates, and the novices.

"Nothing can divide us, brother!" shouted Gamaz.

Rasaad feigned a warm smile, but in his heart he felt only doubt.

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## Rasaad: Character Sheet

You can recruit Rasaad yn Bashir in Beamdog's *Baldur's Gate*, *Baldur's Gate: Siege of Dragonspear*, and *Baldur's Gate II Enhanced Editions*. As an added bonus, we've worked with the folks at Beamdog to also provide the following fifth edition character sheet for Rasaad.

[DOWNLOAD CHARACTER SHEET](#)

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# D&D BEYOND

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CLASS & LEVEL

PLAYER NAME

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- ☐ Constitution
- ☐ Intelligence
- ☐ Wisdom
- ☐ Charisma

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SAVING THROWS

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CONSTITUTION

INTELLIGENCE

WISDOM

CHARISMA

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- ☐ Arcana
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- ☐ Persuasion
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Sleight of Hand
- ☐ Stealth
- ☐ Survival
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

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INITIATIVE

ARMOR

CLASS

DEFENSES

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

ABILITY SAVE DC

SPEED

Max HP

Current HP

Temp HP

HIT POINTS

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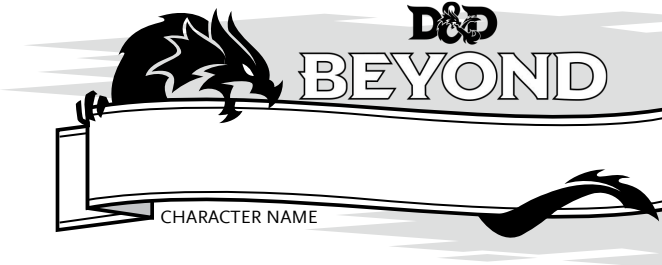
CHARACTER NAME

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WEIGHT CARRIED

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EXPERIENCE POINTS

CHARACTER NAME

ADDITIONAL FEATURES & TRAITS

NAME	QTY	WEIGHT	NAME	QTY	WEIGHT
ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT					



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ALIGNMENT	FAITH	SKIN	EYES	HAIR

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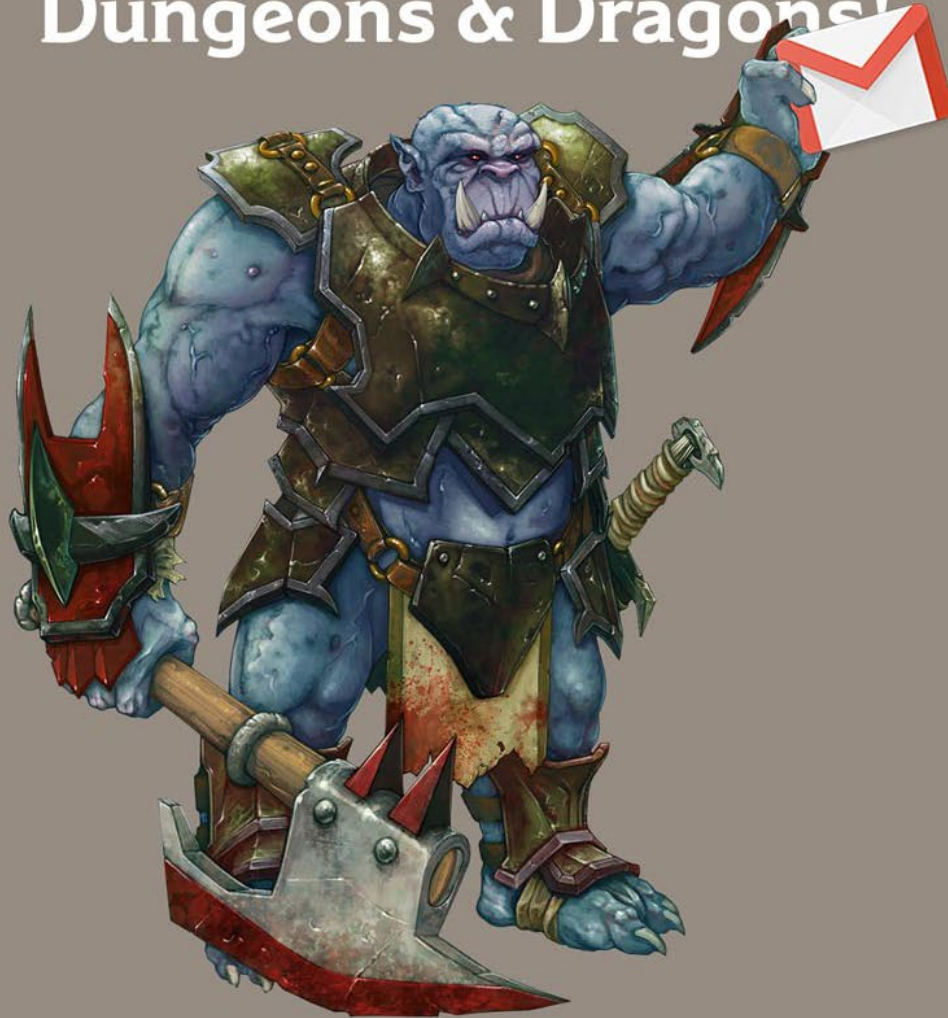
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# Next Issue: Dragon+ 25

Join our stream of consciousness in the next exciting edition of *Dragon+*!



We head out on the briny once again in Issue 25 to take an in-depth look between the covers of 2019 sourcebook *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*. Continuing that literary theme we'll also be taking a sneak peek at the forthcoming Acquisitions Incorporated D&D book. Will there be a pop-up chandelier in the center you can hang a cut-out Viari character from? We can but dream...



We'll also be opening the *Stranger Things*-themed D&D Starter Set to take a look inside. That includes *Hunt for the Thessalhydra*—an adventure written in the style of Mike Wheeler, the show's Dungeon Master—and two exclusive Demogorgon figures.

We'll also talk to our second Extra Life donor (and our second religious leader to boot following Fred Kluth's chat this issue!) as we thank them for their generosity. Plus there'll be more fiction, exclusive previews, all our regulars such as the best video and audio highlights, and much, *much* more!

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ART DIRECTOR: **Dylan Channon**

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS: **Boleslav, Toni B., Zoltan Boros, Christopher Burdett, Conceptopolis, Cornelius C., Thomas C., Tiffany C., Sidharth Chaturvedi, Jeff Easley, Will Kalkanis-Ellis, Tess Fowler, Tim Hartin, Ralph Horsley, Heather Hudson, Hydro 74, Fred Kluth, Tyler Jacobson, Herman Lau, Rob Lazzaretti, Troy Little, Mad, James P. Mullen, Dylan P., Claudio Pozas, Jason Pruett, Christina Q., Jason Rainville, Grzegorz Rutkowski (cover), Richard S., Mike Schley, Cynthia Sheppard, Craig J Spearing, Dean Spencer, Ibrahem Swaid, John T., Emi Tanji, Dave W., Richard Whitters, N.C. Winters**

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